Abraham Cowley's Plantarum Libri Sex
A Cavalier Poet and the Classical Canon

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Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex*

A Cavalier Poet and the Classical Canon

by

Caroline Jane Ibbetson Spearing

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For the Spearing boys

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Abstract

Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* (1662 and 1668), a polymetric Latin poem of some 7,000 lines by a major English poet of the Interregnum and early Restoration, exists in no modern edition or translation and has received very little critical attention.

This thesis demonstrates that the *Plantarum* deserves wider study. Showing how the work's complex and nuanced interaction with classical intertexts is brought to bear on contemporary literary and political concerns, it aims to establish the poem as an important work by a writer at the heart of seventeenth-century literary and political activity.

In the Introduction, I briefly describe Cowley's life and work before contextualising the *Plantarum* in terms of neo-Latin and English literature and surveying existing scholarship. Chapter 1 looks at the elegiac books 1-2 (1662) in terms of their Ovidian intertext, relating Cowley's poetics of change both to the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* and to the political upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century.

Chapter 2 considers books 3-4 in terms of their Horatianism and of the allusions to Caroline masque generated through use of the Chloris/Flora/Henrietta Maria identification. Rather than a Royalist retreat, Flora's court represents a Stoic *negotium animi* where the nature of monarchy is energetically debated.

In Chapter 3 I show how Cowley juxtaposes the natural resources of the New World against the cultural heritage of the Old. I look at the combination of classical intertextuality and British national identity in his account of the forest, showing how he depicts the Stuart monarchy as its guarantor and guardian. After demonstrating the sophistication of Cowley's engagement with Virgil and Lucan in the narrative of the Civil War and Restoration, I argue for an identification between Britain and America, and that books 5 and 6 are unified by Cowley's prophecy of a maritime empire for the Stuart dynasty.

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Abbreviations

BC	Lucan, *Bellum Civile.* Text cited from Housman 1926.
De Vita	Sprat, Thomas (1668) *De Vita & Scriptis A. Couleii*, prefaced to *Poemata Latina*.
EEBO	*Early English Books Online*. Electronic resource. https://eebo.chadwyck.com/home
Essays	Cowley, Abraham (1668) *Several Discourses by Way of Essays, in Verse and Prose*, from *Works* (1668).
Life	Sprat, Thomas (1668) 'An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Abraham Cowley. Written to Mr M. Clifford', prefaced to *Works* (1668).
NH	Pliny the Elder, *Natural History.*
OCT	Oxford Classical Text.
PLD	Cowley, Abraham (1662) *A. Couleii: Plantarum libri duo*. London: Nathaniel Brooks.
Plantarum	Cowley, Abraham (1668) *Sex libri plantarum, viz. duo herbarum, florum, sylvarum,* from *Poemata Latina*.
Poemata Latina	Cowley, Abraham (1668) *Abrahami Couleii Angli Poemata latina. In quibus continentur, sex libri plantarum, viz. duo herbarum, florum, sylvarum. Et unus miscellaneorum.* London.
Poems	Cowley, Abraham (1656) *Poems: viz. I. Miscellanies. II. The Mistress, or, Love verses. III. Pindarique Odes. And IV. Davideis, or, a Sacred poem of the troubles of David*. London.
Works (1668)	Cowley, Abraham (1668) *The Works of Mr Abraham Cowley. Consisting of those which were formerly printed: and those which he design'd for the press, now published out of the authors original copies.* London.
Works (1689)	Cowley, Abraham (1689) *The Second and Third Parts of the Works of Mr Abraham Cowley, the Second containing what was written and published by himself in his younger years: now reprinted together. The sixth edition. The Third containing his Six Books of Plants ... now*

made English by several hands (J. O., C. Cleve, N. Tate, Mrs. A. Behn), etc. London.

Note on Typography, Texts, and Translations

Quotations from the *Plantarum* are taken from *Poemata Latina* (1668). I have retained the original capitalisation, italics, punctuation and diacritic markings, but have silently modernised ligatures, long 's', and initial 'j'.

Line numbers are from the online text (Sutton 2006/7).

When using other Early Modern printed sources, I have as far as possible retained original spelling and typography.

All passages from the *Plantarum Libri Sex* are translated, using my own translations unless otherwise specified. I have occasionally diverged from the punctuation of *Poemata Latina* for the sake of verbal felicity.

Other Early Modern texts have been translated if a close English translation is not readily available. Passages from classical authors are not translated.

Passages from classical authors are taken from the Oxford Classical Text unless otherwise indicated.

England and Britain

As a very general rule, Cowley will use *Britannia* and *Britanni* when referring to the island of Great Britain; *Anglia* and *Angli* for England and the English people, particularly when contrasted with the Scots (as in the account of the Bishops' War at 6.631-642, or the handing over of Charles I at 6.700-703). However, he frequently seems to treat the terms as interchangeable: thus the oak tree (*robur)* worshipped by the Druids at 6.526-532 is *Angliacum*, while the oak (*quercus*) celebrated throughout the world (6.613-614) is *Britanna*. The Wars of the Roses are fought *per campos Britannos* (3.1090). Charles II returns to a *fausta Britannia* (3.63), but Flora seeks *Anglica regna* (3.75).

In the discussion of individual passages I have therefore followed the term used by Cowley, where possible; in more general discussion, I have broadly distinguished between geographical and political application, while recognising the flexibility of Cowley's own usage.

Introduction

> I proposed in setting forward this Work, that every English Man, as far as was possible, should be master of their beloved COWLEY entire.
>
> Nahum Tate, 'To his Grace Charles Duke of Somerset.'[1]

Within the overall framework of a poem about plants, Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* (1662 and 1668) reworks the poetry of – among others – Ovid, Horace, Virgil and Lucan to explore themes which include exile, gender relations, forestry and empire, ending with a classically-inflected narrative of the Civil War and Restoration.[2] This thesis aims to demonstrate the sophistication with which these themes and intertexts are handled and to establish the *Plantarum* as a major work by a leading seventeenth-century poet.

Restoration literature regularly used the writing of the classical past to shape a discourse of the present. The return of Charles II was variously depicted as a new Augustan Age or a return of the Golden Age; writers confidently predicted a new Roman Empire and a resurgence in the arts that would rival the achievements of Greece and Rome.[3] Cowley, however, chooses to present his discourse in the Latin language itself, enabling complex and subtle patterns of allusion which encompass precise modes of expression as well as themes, tropes and narrative details. Written in the aftermath of the transformative upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, the *Plantarum Libri Sex* [henceforth *Plantarum*] demonstrates a particular Royalist response to the representational challenge facing writers of the early Restoration.[4]

Ruth Monreal's study of the *Plantarum* focused on the poet's use of classical allusion; recent articles by Victoria Moul have either provided a broad overview or addressed individual sections of the work.[5] My aim in this thesis is to historicise Cowley's poem, locating

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[1] Dedicatory epistle, *Works* (1689).

[2] *PLD* and *Poemata Latina*. The text of *Poemata Latina* is available in a facsimile edition by *EEBO*. The complete text of the *Plantarum Libri Sex*, transcribed from the 1678 edition, can be found at Sutton 2006/7, with hyperlinks to the 1689 English translation and to Cowley's footnotes. The most recent printed edition of the *Plantarum* is Grosart 1881, which follows the text of *Poemata Latina*. An edition of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* by J. Daniel Kinney, with introduction, notes and facing translation, is forthcoming. Professor Kinney's website, *The Abraham Cowley Text and Image Archive*, is an invaluable source of related literary and visual material (http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/kinney). I am extremely grateful to Professor Kinney for his willingness to share his unpublished research. Discussions of the Latin text of the poem as a whole can be found in Moul, *EEBO Introductions*; Monreal 2010; Sutton 2006/7 and 2010; Bradner 1940: 118-121; Nethercot 1931: 220-225, 255-256; Loiseau 1931: 481-5. Individual passages or sections of the work are addressed in Ludwig 1982; Hofmann 1994: 420-656; Monreal 2005; Moul, *The Neo-Latin Anthology* and 2012, 2013, 2015a. Hinman's chapter on the *Plantarum* refers to the text in the English translation of 1689. (Hinman 1960: 267-296), as do the discussions in Anselment 1988: 180-184; Scodel 2002: 138-141; McColley 2007: 53-54; Preston 2015: 206-108.

[3] Hammond 2006: 3; Sharpe 2013: 46-56; José 1984: 36-37, 44-66; Erskine-Hill 1983: 212-222.

[4] Sawday 1992; Maguire 1992; MacLean 1990. I abbreviate *Plantarum Libri Sex* to *Plantarum*, despite Heinz Hofmann's strongly-worded disapproval of the practice (Hofmann 1994: 627).

[5] Monreal 2005 and 2010. Overview: Moul *EEBO Introductions*; *The Neo-Latin Anthology*; particular sections or aspects: Moul, 2012, 2013, 2015a. For a historicising reading of the work which discusses the text in translation, see Anselment 1988: 180-184.

it firmly in its contemporary political and literary context and considering it as a Royalist work.[6] In this, I follow work of the past few decades on Royalist writing of the Civil War and Interregnum, which has revealed the political content latent in so much of the literature of the period and has drawn attention to the cryptic discourse in which Royalist sentiments were expressed.[7] This scholarship, however, has perforce largely confined itself to literature in the vernacular.[8] My thesis thus aims to be the first study of the Latin text of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* to combine classical scholarship with the methodologies employed in the study of mid-seventeenth-century English literature.

1 Abraham Cowley: Life and Works

> *En Poemata Latina Couleii tui, Viri Eruditione & Scriptis, sed Vita maxime memorabilis.*
>
> Here are the Latin poems of your friend Cowley, a man memorable for his learning and his writings, but most of all for his life.
>
> Sprat, *De Vita*, sig. a1[r].

Abraham Cowley was born in the City of London in 1618, the seventh and posthumous child of Thomas Cowley, a stationer.[9] He was educated first at Westminster School, where he published his first collection of poems, *Poetical Blossomes*, in 1633, and, from 1636, at Trinity College, Cambridge.[10] Here he was a contemporary of Andrew Marvell and, in 1641, first made the acquaintance of the thirteen-year-old second Duke of Buckingham, who was to remain a friend throughout Cowley's life.[11] In 1640 he was elected to a minor fellowship of the college. Works dating from this period include his Latin comedy *Naufragium Joculare* (performed February 1638), his play *The Guardian*, which was performed for Charles, Prince of Wales in 1642, and occasional Latin poems celebrating royal births and Charles I's return from Scotland in 1641.[12] Cowley left Cambridge for Oxford in 1643, anticipating the visit of the commission to administer the Solemn League and

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[6] 'To "historicize" an author means that one will place his works in the historical context in which they were, or are thought to have been written, and use that information not just to enhance one's understanding of those works and their motivation, but to give them a political edge they might not otherwise show', Patterson 2008: 178.

[7] Such work includes the studies of Patterson 1984; Potter 1989; Corns 1992; Zwicker 1996; Loxley 1997; Wilcher 2001; Pugh 2010.

[8] Exceptions are work on Payne Fisher by Laura Knoppers, Victoria Moul and David Norbrook (Norbrook 1999: 239-238; Knoppers 2000: 58-64, 89-93; Moul 2016 and 2017b); and on Ovid by Maggie Kilgour (Kilgour 2012). See also Hardie 2012; Norbrook 1999: 209-212.

[9] The earliest accounts of Cowley's life are the two biographical sketches, one in Latin, one in English, with which Sprat respectively prefaced the *Poemata Latina* and *Works* (1668) (*De Vita* and *Life*). Aubrey's account in *Brief Lives* (1679-80) adds some details not found in Sprat (Bennett 2014). Dr. Johnson's *Life of Cowley* draws heavily on Sprat, and is of greatest value as a source for the eighteenth-century reception of the poet. (Lonsdale 2006: vol. 1, 191-234). Grosart 1881: ix-cxxii contains a substantial biographical account and critical assessment. The most recent modern biographies both appeared in 1931: by Arthur Nethercot, in English (Nethercot 1931) and Jean Loiseau, in French (Loiseau 1931). To them must be added the article by Alexander Lindsay in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Lindsay 2004).

[10] Cowley 1633.

[11] Marvell matriculated in 1633. Cowley entered Trinity as a 'dry chorister', an office which Marvell also seems to have performed between 1640 and 1642 (Kelliher 2004). On the relationship between Cowley and Marvell, see further Hirst and Zwicker 2012: 118; 113 n. 17).

[12] Cowley 1638 and 1650. The miscellaneous Latin poems can be found at Sutton 2006/7: I-V.

Covenant the following February.[13] While at Oxford he appears to have become a member of the Great Tew circle, and entered the service of Henrietta Maria's secretary Henry Jermyn, with whom he left for Paris, probably in 1644.[14] He was to be based in Paris for most of the ensuing decade, encrypting and transcribing correspondence, and carrying out diplomatic missions in the Netherlands, Scotland and Jersey.[15]

Cowley returned to London in the summer of 1654, apparently to pursue further clandestine activity, but was arrested in April 1655 and imprisoned for over six months. He was finally bailed for the sum of £1000, paid by his college friend Dr. Thomas Scarborough.[16] Cowley's *Poems* appeared early in 1656, apparently prepared for the press during his imprisonment, and consisting of a book of miscellanies, a collection of love poems (*The Mistress*, published in an unauthorised version in 1647), the *Pindarique Odes*, and the four books of the unfinished epic *Davideis.*[17] Two substantial Latin poems, the dedication to Cambridge University and the Latin version of the first book of the *Davideis*, anticipate the turn Cowley was to take in the *Plantarum*.[18]

In the volume's preface, Cowley concedes that the Royalist cause is lost and appears to come to an accommodation with the new regime:

> Now though in all *Civil Dissentions*, when they break into open hostilities, the *War* of the *Pen* is allowed to accompany that of the *Sword*, and every one is in a maner obliged with his *Tongue*, as well as *Hand*, to serve and assist the side which he engages in; yet when the event of battel, and the unaccountable *Will* of *God* has determined the controversie, and that we have submitted to the conditions of the *Conqueror*, we must lay down our *Pens* as well as *Arms*, we must march out of our *Cause* it self, and *dismantle* that, as well as our *Towns* and *Castles*, of all the *Works* and *Fortifications* of *Wit* and *Reason* by which we defended it. We ought not sure, to begin our selves to revive the remembrance of those times and actions for which we have received a *General Amnestie*, as a *favor* from the *Victor*. The truth is, neither *We*, nor *They*, ought by the *Representation* of *Places* and *Images* to make a kind of *Artificial Memory* of those things wherein we are all bound to desire, like *Themistocles*, the *Art* of *Oblivion*.
>
> *Poems* (1656), sig. a4^{r}.

Sprat removed the passage from the 1668 *Works*, and in the *Life* he vigorously defends the poet's commitment to the Royalist cause:

> He therefore believed that it would be a meritorious service to the King, if any man who was known to have followed his interest, could insinuate into the Usurpers minds, that men of his Principles were now willing to be quiet, and could perswade the poor oppressed Royalists to conceal their affections, for better occasions. And as for his own particular, he was a close Prisoner, when he writ that against which the exception is made; so that he saw it was impossible for him to pursue the ends for which he came hither, if he did not make some kind of declaration of his peaceable intentions.
>
> Sprat, *Life*, sig. a1^{v}-a2^{r}.

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[13] Nethercot 1931: 78.
[14] Nethercot 1931: 80-81, 90-91.
[15] Nethercot 1931: 126-130.
[16] Nethercot 1931: 142-157.
[17] *Poems*.
[18] *Poems* sig. A1^{r}-2^{r}; *Davideidos, Liber Primus*: 1-23.

Scholarly opinion remains divided as to the extent to which Cowley's words indicate his abandonment of the Royalist cause. Discussion of both the *Pindariques* and the *Davideis* lacks consensus as to whether they should be read as indicative of Cowley's continuing Royalist allegiance, his compromise with the new regime, or indeed whether they have any political resonance at all. [19] Critics attuned to the widespread use of coded language in Royalist writing of the period have tended to view the preface as disingenuous, and to read the *Pindariques* as offering heavily-veiled encouragement to the defeated party; others have followed Nethercot in seeing in the work a pragmatic acceptance of a changed order.[20] Annabel Patterson, on the other hand, views the *Pindariques* as an attempt to represent the tumultuous events of the recent past in imaginative literature without imposing a rigid allegorical correspondence; Nigel Smith goes still further, reading in the work's conflicted discourse a meditation on the instability of language itself.[21] Smith argues against a role for the *Davideis* as public commentary, though others, including Anselment and Wilcher, have read it as holding out the possibility of political change.[22] In my discussion of *Plantarum* 1-2, I interrogate the text in the light of this sense of a code which resists deciphering, or which permits multiple decipherings.

After his release, Cowley studied medicine at Oxford, receiving the degree of Doctor of Physic in 1657. His scientific interests are reflected in his involvement with the early Royal Society and in his *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy*, a proposal for a scientific academy.[23] Sprat insists that he continued to work for the King's return; but it seems that he was trusted by neither side, and at the Restoration he failed to secure the post of Master of the Savoy which had been promised him by both Charles I and his son.[24] Through the patronage of Jermyn and of Buckingham he retired, first to Barnelmes in 1663 and then two years later to Chertsey, where he died in 1667.[25]

Cowley's *Essays*, his last major English work, were composed during this period. Their self-conscious rejection of the world of court and city, their embracing of obscurity, solitude and a frugal self-sufficiency, has caused them to be read as central texts in the literature of neo-Horatian withdrawal.[26] However, while Cowley was portraying the life of the retired country gentleman in the *Essays*, he was more or less simultaneously engaging

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[19] See the discussion and summary in Wilcher 2001: 340-345. Important discussions include Patterson 1984: 152-166; Revard 1993; Corns 1992: 252-265; Nethercot 1931: 158-164; Nevo 1963: 119-122; Langley 1976; N. Smith 1994: 285; D'Addario 2010: 124-132.
[20] Royalist readings: Revard 1993 and Corns 1992: 252-265; Nethercot 1931: 158-164 and Nevo 1963: 119-122 argue that the *Pindariques* represent a genuine changing of sides.
[21] Patterson 1984: 164-165; N. Smith 1994: 285.
[22] N. Smith 1994: 218; Anselment 1988: 171-172; Wilcher 2001: 346. Trotter, on the other hand, reads the work as overtly anti-monarchist (Trotter 1979: 83-109).
[23] Cowley was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in March 1661, but does not appear in the Fellows' database and, apparently, never paid his dues. I am grateful to Noah Moxham for clarifying the details of his membership.
[24] Cowley 1661. Sprat, *De Vita* sig. c2^{r-v}; Nethercot 1931: 146-147, 160, 212-215.
[25] Nethercot 1931: 235, 243-247.
[26] The standard discussions remain Miner 1971 and Røstvig 1962. See also J. Martindale 1977: 331; King 2003: 48; Scott-Baumann 2013: 88.

directly with public life in the *Plantarum*, whether explicitly, in the New World and Civil War sections of the last two books, or implicitly, via the metaphor of the body politic that pervades the work.[27] I address the question of Cowley's retirement stance in chapter 2, where I attempt to create a more nuanced view by considering the *Plantarum* in the light of an Early Modern Stoic retirement, in which ongoing public engagement takes the form of active contemplation rather than withdrawal.[28]

2 The *Plantarum Libri Sex* – structure

> 'The major work of a serious literary figure'
>
> David Money.[29]

At just over 7,000 lines, the *Plantarum* is Cowley's longest extant work. The first two books, in elegiac couplets and dealing with herbs, were published in 1662. In 1668, Cowley's literary executor Thomas Sprat supervised the posthumous publication of the complete work, which added books 3 and 4, on flowers, with lyric odes inset into an elegiac narrative, and the hexameter books 5 and 6, on trees. One of the most distinctive features of the work is its use of speech *in propria persona* (*prosopopoeia*): Cowley's anthropomorphised plants declaim their own merits, denigrate their rivals, are familiar with literature ancient and modern, and – in book 2 – hold an erudite and vigorous debate as to the purpose of menstruation.[30] (For a detailed tabular analysis of the six books, see the *Appendix*.)[31]

Book 1, in elegiacs, opens with a preface (1-56) in which the poet describes his theme and method, and introduces his first plant, Betony (*Vettonica*, 57-160). The book consists of poems on individual plants, some in the authorial voice, some *in propria persona*, with a strong but by no means exclusive focus on their medicinal attributes. The individual sections vary in length from 100 lines (Mint, *Mentha*, 1029-1128) down to four (the first Cyclamen poem, 873-876); Lettuce (*Lactuca*), Sundew (*Rorella*), Cyclamen (*Cyclaminus*), Celandine (*Chelidonia*) and Rocket (*Eruca*) have more than one poem. Unlike the other five books, there is no unifying structure or narrative thread.

Book 2, also in elegiacs, is set in the Oxford Botanic Garden in April. Cowley explains that the plants are animated by the full moon, and hold various meetings, organised by their respective clinical applications (1-132). The Laurel is responsible for reporting to the poet the meeting of the plants used in obstetrics and gynaecology, who hold a debate as to the purpose of menstruation and discuss the use of abortifacients (727-918) and the

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[27] David Norbrook has similarly argued for *Paradise Lost* as a work of political engagement rather than one of retirement and withdrawal (Norbrook 1999: 433-8).
[28] This analysis is indebted to Andrew Shifflett's work on Early Modern Stoicism (Shifflett 1998).
[29] Money 1998: 51.
[30] Monreal 2008: 9.
[31] See also the outline in Moul 2015: 222. Detailed tables can be found in Monreal 2008: 278-313.

phenomenon of hysteria (919-1181). The meeting ends with the irruption of the gardener, whose wife is in labour and who is seeking cyclamen to speed the birth (1182-1204).

Books 3 and 4 are set on the banks of the Thames in May 1660, on the day of the Restoration, and depict a contest, judged by the goddess Flora, to crown the Queen of the Flowers. The competition is organised by season, with flowers of the winter and spring in book 3 and of the summer and autumn in 4. Elegiac narrative is inset with lyric passages, the majority in Horatian metres, in which individual flowers base their respective claims on their aesthetic and pharmacological powers. Also inset is the sequence of epigrams which opens book 4 (4.63-502) and which includes exotics such as the Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*, 332-340) and the Passionflower (*Maracotta,* 473-502) as well as familiar English garden flowers like the Cornflower and the Snapdragon (*Cyanus*, 87-98; *Antirrhinum,* 119-124). The contest ends with Flora declaring a republic, with the Rose and Lily as consuls (1060-1071).[32] At the hinge of the two books, Cowley places two important digressions: on the Wars of the Roses at the end of book 3 (1085-1125) and on the *beatus vir* at the opening of book 4 (1-54).

The final pair of books shifts from elegiac couplets to the dactylic hexameter. Book 5 takes as its setting the Atlantic Fortunate Isles in October, where Pomona is holding her annual autumn festival, attended by both European and American deities. The latter call for a contest between fruit trees of Old and New Worlds (1-142), which takes the form of a parade, of first European (143-782) and then American trees (795-969), with a focus on practical utility and cultural tradition. While Pomona considers her verdict, a quarrel breaks out between Bacchus and Omelochilus, who have been drinking throughout the contest, which quickly erupts into a full-scale theomachy (970-1030). Eventually the fight is calmed by Apollo, who promises that the cruelty of the Spanish conquerors of America will be avenged when, in turn, the New World grows to eclipse the old (1031-1200).

Book 6 is set in the Forest of Dean in the 1630s and, after an invitation to Cowley's muse to accompany him into a dense forest (1-39), opens with a description of the halcyon days of the early Stuart kings (40-65) and of the series of ominous portents which presaged their end (66-152). These portents lead the Dryad of the oak to summon a meeting of forest nymphs, whose arrival in the guise of trees is catalogued at 210-434 and to whom she prophesies the imminent Civil War, issuing instructions for their protection of Charles II in his flight from the Battle of Worcester in 1651 (558-1022). The book ends with the Restoration and the victory over the Dutch at the Battle of Lowestoft in 1665 (1023-1230).

The work thus combines botanical, medical and practical information, mythological and cultural allusion, and topical reference. In setting it ranges from Oxford to the islands of the Atlantic; its various narratives stretch from the Trojan War to the Battle of Lowestoft in

[32] See also Moul 2012: 87-88.

1665; it embraces the discovery of the Americas and of the circulation of the blood. It couples the prose of the footnotes with the poetry of the main text, which itself encompasses elegiacs, lyric, epigram and hexameter epic. It engages with the classical genres of Ovidian elegy, Horatian lyric and Virgilian epic, georgic and pastoral, as well as Lucan, Lucretius and Latin love elegy; but it is also in dialogue with the masques of Ben Jonson, the Restoration panegyric of John Dryden and others, and with John Evelyn's writings on the forest and garden. In handling themes of the garden of retirement and the garden, it resonates with Katherine Philips' retirement poetry and with Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' and 'The Garden', though the uncertain dating of the latter makes these relationships difficult to clarify.[33] This thesis aims to show how this remarkable range and scope is brought to bear on the England of the 1660s, providing a means of telling the story of the nation's past, of explaining the present, and of plotting the imperial future.

3 The *Plantarum* and existing scholarship

Despite the considerable interest of the *Plantarum Libri Sex,* the work remains understudied (above, n. 2). While the Latin works of Marvell and, especially, Milton have been extensively studied, neo-Latin works by other Early Modern English writers are only beginning to receive widespread scholarly attention.[34] Cowley's Latin poetry presents a particular challenge in the absence of a modern edition or translation, rendering it more than usually inaccessible to scholars of English literature who lack the high degree of expertise in Latin necessary to engage with the unedited and untranslated text.[35] Consequently, existing scholarship on the Latin text typically focuses on its rich engagement with the classical canon and on the European neo-Latin context. Ruth Monreal's monograph on the *Plantarum,* the most extensive modern study, is representative, focusing as it does on Cowley's poem and the *Hortorum Libri Quattuor* of Réné Rapin (1665) as neo-Latin botanical poetry.[36] By contrast, discussion of the *Plantarum* in English literary studies is understandably focused on

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[33] These relationships were first noted by Allan Pritchard (Pritchard 1983) and have been discussed most recently in Scott-Baumann 2013. The later dating is accepted by Marvell's biographer and editor Nigel Smith (N. Smith 2007: 152; 2010: 219-220) and in Nicholas Maltzahn's *An Andrew Marvell Chronology* (Maltzahn 2005: 5, 102); it is contested by Susan Clarke (Clarke 2010b) and in Hirst and Zwicker 2012: 164-177. See further Loxley 2012 and Barnaby 2000.

[34] Early works in the field are Bradner 1940; Binns 1974 and 1990. Important recent publications include Money 1998; Ford, Bloemendahl, Fantazzi and Ramminger 2014; Houghton and Manuwald 2012; Knight and Tilg 2015; Moul 2017a.

[35] In the absence of Professor Kinney's forthcoming edition (above, n. 2), the Latin text of the *Plantarum* is most readily available on *EEBO*, which features digitised versions of *PLD*, *Poemata Latina* and Cowley 1678). *Poemata Latina* is available as an *EEBO* reprint. The complete text of the *Plantarum*, transcribed from the 1678 edition, can be found at Sutton 2006/7, with line numbers and hyperlinks both to the 1689 English translation and to Cowley's footnotes.
The lack of modern editions of Cowley's work extends to the English writings. The most recent complete edition of both English and Latin works is Grosart 1881; for the English writings, see Waller 1905-6; for the *Essays*, Gough 1915. The first two volumes of a projected complete edition of Cowley's works were published in 1989 and 1993 respectively (Calhoun, Heyworth, King and Pritchard, 1989-1993). Vol. 1 incorporates Allan Pritchard's edition of *The Civil War* (Pritchard 1973). There exists a separate modern edition of the *Davideis* (Shadduck 1987).

[36] Monreal 2010. The focus of the present thesis on the *Plantarum* in its English context precludes detailed engagement with Rapin's work.

the English translation produced in 1689 under the auspices of Nahum Tate, who himself translated books 4 and 5.[37] This translation omits the vast majority of Cowley's footnotes and as such results in a very different texture from that of *Poemata Latina*; moreover, the freedom of the translation into English verse flattens the classical intertextuality of Cowley's original and on occasion departs radically from the Latin.[38]

4 Methodological and theoretical approaches

My study of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* centres on close reading of the Latin text, with a particular focus on the intertextual relationship with Ovid, Horace, Virgil and Lucan, to argue that Cowley brings those authors to bear on his text in order to stimulate meditation and reflection on contemporary events. My work is thus informed by classical scholarship, both in terms of work on individual authors and in terms of the theory of intertextuality, allusion and reception; and by work in the field of Early Modern literary and cultural studies and the reception of classical texts.

The *Plantarum* engages profoundly with its contemporary context and my work thus faces the methodological challenge of confronting the very different reading habits and cultural practice of a seventeenth-century readership. To begin with, as a 7,000-line Latin poem, the *Plantarum* assumes an audience deeply versed in Latin literature, a familiarity which will have had its origins in the humanist educational tradition, and been further ingrained by habits of excerpting, noting and commonplacing.[39] As such, Cowley's readers will have been alert to classical allusion, whether 'local', in the sense of an isolated echo of an earlier text, or 'systematic', recurrent reference to a predecessor which creates an ongoing relationship; they will have been alert to thematic and narrative correspondences, and to potential parallels between contemporary and ancient characters.[40] The methodological foundation of this thesis is close reading of Cowley's Latin text, and so the patterns of allusion which I discuss in greatest depth are lexical, redeploying the language and diction of a classical predecessor. Rather than attempting to ascertain authorial intention, or an Iserian 'implied reader', in the deployment of these allusions, I have instead preferred to 'realise meaning at the point of reception': while not denying the importance of 'local' allusion in providing a specific intertextual colouring, I have paid particular attention to 'systematic'

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[37] Translation: *Works* (1689). The translation was undertaken by a number of different hands, including Tate himself and Aphra Behn. For references to discussions of the English text, or of particular passages, see above, n. 2. Behn's translation has received a certain amount of scholarly attention: see Crompton 1996: 145-148; Spearing 1996: 155; 174; Chalmers 2004: 184-185; Greer 1995: 139, 189.
[38] Heinz Hofmann, whose discussion of the *Plantarum* is based on the Latin text, writes disparagingly of Hinman's reliance on the English translation (Hinman 1960: 267-296, currently the most extensive English treatment of the poem as a whole) calling it 'unreliable and often outright wrong' (Hofmann 1994: 627).
[39] Early Modern education: see Nethercot 1931: 14-18; 35-41; M. Clarke 1959; Wallace 2010: 18-19; Mack 2014. On Early Modern reading habits, see Zwicker 1996: 3-5; Cressy 1980; Jardine and Grafton 1990; Hackel 2005; Beal 1993; Schurink 2010.
[40] Kallendorf 2007: 225.

patterns and to the resonance of a given allusion with other Early Modern receptions of the classical text.[41] I consider allusion as a means of establishing similarity with and difference from a classical predecessor, and also look at instances of allusions to passages which are themselves already in dialogue with a third text.[42]

In locating the *Plantarum* in its contemporary context, I follow the work of those scholars of political culture who have adapted the methodologies of New Historicism, first applied to the relatively centralised and court-dominated literary culture of Tudor and Jacobean England, to the fragmented and polyphonic discourse and emergent public sphere of the mid-seventeenth century.[43] Sharing with New Historicism a methodological assumption that text and context are inseparable, literary, political and cultural scholars of the period have explored both the operation of particular cultural circumstances on the production of a given text, and the extent to which literary representation frames and shapes cultural narrative and description.[44] Several of these scholars, drawing on speech-act theory, have demonstrated the instability of discourse given the rapidity of political and cultural change in the period and the extent to which meaning was conferred by a specific audience at a specific point in time – what Zachary Lesser has termed 'the politics of publication.'[45] Paul Hammond has shown that Restoration writers were sensitive to the ability of circumstances of composition or publication to affect the reading of a text, and has highlighted the number of works published in the early Restoration which claimed an earlier date of composition.[46] Cowley's own awareness of this instability is shown by his careful dating of the composition of *PLD* (published 1662) to the late Interregnum.[47] In drawing attention to the gap between composition and publication, he attempts to manage the reception of the text, compelling the reader to consider it in the context of the 1650s rather than in that of its actual publication after the Restoration. In this study of the *Plantarum*, I look at the text in its historical moment, one which, in the case of *PLD*, is complicated and nuanced by gaps between alleged composition and publication.

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[41] Iser 1978: 37-38; C. Martindale 1993: 7-8. 'References that enter an allusive system have the added advantage of the system as a guide to their interpretation' (Kallendorf 2007: 225).

[42] This type of allusion, identified by Richard Thomas as the 'window reference', will be seen especially in the case of the Lucanian references in book 6, where Cowley engages with Lucan's sophisticated and often adversarial dialogue with the *Aeneid* (R. Thomas 1986: 188-189). On types of allusion, see Hinds 1998; C. Martindale 1993; Hammond 2006: 73-75.

[43] See particularly Loxley 1997: 2-3; Lesser 2004: 20-21; Helmers 2015: 13-16.

[44] The past decades have emphasised the extent to which seventeenth-century English literature is rooted in its political context. Important general surveys are Norbrook 1999; Corns 1992 and 1997; Zwicker 1996; N. Smith 2004; and the edited volumes Healy and Sawday 1990; Summers and Pebworth 1988 and 1999.
Politically-inflected studies of Royalism and Royalist literature include Anselment 1988; Potter 1989; Loxley 1997; Wilcher 2001; De Groot 2004; McDowell 2008; Helmers 2015. Work by historians, notably Kevin Sharpe and Blair Worden, has emphasised the extent to which the literature of the period is embedded in its political and cultural context: see e.g. Sharpe 1987 and 1989; Worden 2007a and 2007b.

[45] Norbrook 1999: 9-11; Sharpe 1989: 4-7; Lesser 2004: 20-21. Miner's classic study of cavalier poetry remarks on the frequency with which compositions of the 1620s and 1630s were not published until after the outbreak of the Civil War (Miner 1971: 86-87).

[46] Hammond 2006: 3-9.

[47] *Nam haec omnia scripta sunt paulo ante foelicissimum regis reditum* ('For all this was written a little before the most happy return of the king', *Poemata Latina* sig. b7^{r}.

Consideration of the contemporary impact of the *Plantarum* must take into account the role of the book as physical artefact in shaping its immediate reception. This is particularly important given the work's complicated publishing history, notably the incorporation of the 1662 *PLD* into the posthumous publication of all six books in 1668 and the role of Cowley's literary executor Thomas Sprat in that publication. But it is also important to consider how the 1662 publication, with its authorial footnotes and extensive prefatory material – a practice also employed in the 1656 *Poems* – shows Cowley's awareness of the need to manage the reader's experience of the text through paratextual content.

The bibliographic survey of the 1662 and 1668 volumes which closes this introduction is informed by the foundational work of Gèrard Genette and by recent nuancing of that work by Early Modern scholars.[48] Genette's *Paratexts* identified a 'threshold of interpretation' comprising material such as authorial or editorial prefaces, footnotes, illustrations, and afterwords, which represented a liminal zone between text and reader through which the author, and/or the author's 'allies', attempt to direct the reception of the work.[49] Genette argued that this paratextual material steers the reader towards an 'architect', the type of discourse (including, but not confined to, genre) to which the text belongs. More recently the author-centric nature of Genette's work has been challenged by Early Modernists, who rightly point out the importance of paratextual material independent of the author and draw attention to the possibility of conflicting agendas in the various paratexts of any given work.[50] Arthur Marotti has argued suggestively that individual pieces of prefatory material, for example, may be 'a site of contestation and negotiation among authors, printers/publishers, and readership(s).'[51]

The idea of paratextual conflict is a useful one for the *Plantarum* in view of Sprat's editorial involvement. While the footnotes, dedications and preface to the 1662 volume represent the author's own interpretative signals to the reader, we must bear in mind that the presentation of the *Plantarum* in *Poemata Latina* of 1668 is the work of Thomas Sprat, not the author, and that in the relationship between text and paratext may lie conflict as well as collaboration. As will be seen in the discussion at the end of this introduction, and again when I address the issue of Cowley's retirement in chapter 2, Sprat's account of the author's life and work argues for a retreat to scholarship which is not borne out by the text. It does however seem probable that Sprat's involvement was paratextual rather than textual. The speed with which the *Plantarum* was published following the poet's death suggests that the Latin text was substantially complete; Professor Kinney has suggested in correspondence that the absence of footnotes in the second half of book 6 may represent the point at which final revisions were abandoned. Consequently, while remaining alert to Sprat's management

[48] Genette 1997; Lesser 2004; Smith and Wilson 2011.
[49] Genette 1997: 1-2.
[50] Smith and Wilson 2011: 7-10.
[51] Marotti 1995: 222.

of Cowley's reputation in the *De Vita* and the *Life*, I read the Latin text of the poem as the poet's own production.

Criticism of Cowley's writing remains heavily dependent upon biographical readings which centre on his possibly compromised loyalty during the Interregnum and on the nature of and motivation for his retirement.[52] This focus is encouraged by Cowley's own lengthy account of his actions in the preface to *Poems* and by the ostensibly self-revelatory tone of the *Essays*, which until recently were read at face value as a manifesto for a retirement often associated with a neo-Horatian praise of country life.[53] In considering the text of the *Plantarum* alongside the known facts of the poet's life, I do not attempt to construct the personality of its creator, but rather to enable a deeper understanding of the contexts, actual and alleged, of composition and publication given the author's career as a potentially compromised Royalist agent and his subsequent retirement.[54] I shall further consider the way in which the *Plantarum* nuances and modifies the persona of the *Essays* and the character portrayed by Sprat in his Latin and English biographies of the poet.

Central to my reading of the wider resonance of the botanical and medical detail of the *Plantarum* is the recognition of the Early Modern allegorical and analogical habit of reading.[55] E. M. W. Tillyard identified an 'Elizabethan world picture' in which God headed a 'Chain of Being' which descended through an ordered cosmos to the lowest organisms of nature; and that this order was reflected in microcosm by the monarch in the state, by the father in the household and by the head in the body, a thesis further developed and theorised by Michel Foucault.[56] With the historicising turn in Early Modern cultural studies has come an appreciation of the extent to which the analogy between natural and political order resulted in the two becoming inextricably linked and ultimately mutually identified.[57] Studies of Early Modern reading habits have shown how deeply ingrained was the tendency towards analogical and allegorical reading, and how a practice deriving ultimately from the European tradition of Biblical exegesis came to have a general application.[58] This thesis takes as axiomatic that an Early Modern readership will have been quick to infer allegory and analogy in Cowley's descriptions of the natural world.

Moreover, these analogical and allegorical readings will have taken on a political colouring. The concept of 'the king's two bodies' lent a particular valency to the metaphor of

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[52] Examples include Revard 1993; King 2003; P. Davis 2008; Darcy 2013.
[53] 'Liberty, solitude, obscurity, and the country life are his themes now. In talking of them he presents the essential meaning of his poetic career' (Helgerson 1983: 224). See also King 2003: 48-53; Hopkins 1993: 106.
[54] My approach is in this respect divergent from that of P. Davis 2008: 98-109 and Darcy 2013: 32-34.
[55] Sharpe 1989: 20-31; Zwicker 1996: 3-5; Helmers 2015: 16-18.
[56] Tillyard 1943; Foucault 2001: 19-50.
[57] 'The languages of treatises on the body, on the family, on riding, on music, on the Government of Cattle, was highly political because each of these analogues [...] corresponded in some way to the commonweal.' (Sharpe 1989: 8.) See also D. Randall 1995: 5-7.
[58] Zwicker 1996: 3-5; Helmers 2016: 16.

the 'body politic', routinely deployed in Early Modern political discourse, and revivified by the literal decapitation of that body with the execution of Charles I.[59] The continued vigour of the image is shown by Jonathan Sawday's identification of the efforts made by Royalist apologists to reconcile the traditional analogical view with the new discoveries of seventeenth-century science.[60] When, for example, Cowley writes at *Plantarum* 1.107-110 that moisture seizes (*occupat*) the blocked lungs, that a hostile force (*vis inimica*) blocks the airways, that a cough, too weak to drive out the enemy (*hostem*), seeks the external assistance (*externam opem*) of Betony, a political reading will have readily occurred to the seventeenth-century reader.

In the *Plantarum*, potential for allegorical reading of the body is complemented by Early Modern political deployment of tropes of forest and garden, from Shakespeare's identification of England as a garden in *Richard II*, through James Howell's sylvan allegory *Dodona's Grove* to John Evelyn's urgent equation of the health of the forest with the prosperity of the nation.[61] Modern scholarship agrees that the woods, fields and garden in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* provide a commentary on events of the 1640s and 1650s, despite the lack of consensus as to how that commentary should be read.[62] It is my contention that the *Plantarum* should, likewise, be read at least in part as a political meditation.

This general cultural predisposition towards allegorical reading is exploited by Royalist writers of the mid-seventeenth century, who reacted to a hostile political climate by deploying secret and encrypted modes of expression. Annabel Patterson has explored the conditions of reading and writing produced by the existence of censorship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, looking at the ways in which writers were able to circumvent scrutiny by conveying meaning via hidden means.[63] In chapter 1, I argue for *PLD* as a Royalist production of the late Interregnum, whose account of the human, and particularly the female, body overlays a political subtext promoting dynastic monarchy.

In addressing Cowley's treatment of gender in the gynaecological discussion of book 2 and in his use of the female voice in books 3 and 4, I draw on psychoanalytic criticism, notably Diane Purkiss' reading of literary culture in the Civil War, which has demonstrated the challenges to traditional constructions of masculinity posed by the war and regicide.[64] In the light of Purkiss' analysis of an oppositional discourse which attacked what it saw as the

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[59] Kantorowicz 1957. Seventeenth-century uses of the image include James I's speech to Parliament of 21 March 1609 (Sommerville 1994: 179-203); James Harrington, *The Common-Wealth of Oceana* (1656); Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651). For the continued currency of the image in the Restoration, see Hammond 2005: 107-138.
[60] Sawday 1995: 232-234.
[61] Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act 3, Scene 4; Howell 1640; Evelyn 1664. See Theis 2009; Staley 2012; Tigner 2012.
[62] For a survey of modern criticism, see N. Smith 2007: 215-216.
[63] Patterson 1984.
[64] Purkiss 2005.

dangerously emasculating female dominance of the Stuart court, I shall explore the ways in which Cowley attempts to negate the potential threat of the female.[65] Lynn Enterline's and Philip Hardie's Lacanian analysis of Ovid provide further tools for exploring Cowley's ventriloquised women.[66]

Central to my thesis is the importance of the *Plantarum* in its English literary context, and I explore its engagement with a range of Early Modern texts. Cowley claimed 'the example and learning of Ben Johnson [sic]' as the primary formative influence on his poetic career, and had clearly engaged closely with Jonson's work.[67] Jonson's presence is strongest in *Plantarum* 3 and 4, where the Horatian intertext invoked by the inset lyric odes is modulated by a Jonsonian Horatianism of detached moral seriousness. In Chapter 2, I argue that the Jonsonian flavour of the books is strengthened by allusion to Caroline masque, and above all to *Chloridia* (1631), an intertextuality which emphasises Jonson's connection to the Stuart court, echoing the (contested) Royalist claim to Jonson's poetic legacy and bolstering the monarchist agenda of the *Plantarum*.[68]

Cowley's handling of Royalist tropes of exile, defeat and retirement are illuminated by comparison with Cavalier writers such as Fanshawe, Lovelace, Herrick and Vaughan, particularly in the light of recent work on the strategies adopted by committed Royalists during the 1650s.[69] The case for Cowley's rural retreat as a mode of political engagement is strengthened by comparison with the treatment of hortulan retirement in the work of Katherine Philips and Andrew Marvell, which demonstrates, despite uncertainties as to dating, how related versions of the retirement trope were being handled in the very different personal circumstances of three closely contemporary writers.[70] The celebration of the Restoration in books 3 and 6 recognisably belongs to the genre of Stuart panegyric exemplified by Dryden's *Astraea Redux* and Waller's *To the King, Upon His Majesty's Happy Return*, as well as Cowley's own *Ode Upon His Majesty's Restoration and Return*.[71] Finally, John Evelyn's prose *Sylva* (first edition 1664) has much in common with the final two books of the *Plantarum* in their shared Royalist sensitivity to the actual and symbolic value of trees.[72]

Recent scholarship on neo-Latin literature has emphasised the adoption of critical methodologies which adopt a dynamic approach to questions of allusion and intertextuality – now established in the study of classical reception in the vernacular – which highlights the

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[65] Purkiss 2005: 33-77.
[66] Enterline 2000; Hardie 2002b: 45-50.
[67] Hyde 1827: 1.34. See also Calhoun, Heyworth and King 1993: 229; J. Martindale 1977: 315-323; Trotter 1979: 110-112;
[68] See e.g. Worden 2007: 214-238; McDowell 2008: 157-159; Pugh 2010: 74.
[69] The past decades have seen extensive work in this area. See e.g. Patterson 1984; Potter 1989; Corns 1992 and 2007: 229-316; Loxley 1997; Wilcher 2002; McElligott and Smith 2007.
[70] See especially Scott-Baumann 2013:
[71] Dryden 1660; Waller 1660; Cowley 1660.
[72] Evelyn 1664. For the political resonance of Evelyn's work, see Theis 2009: 223-239.

creative processes by which writers rework and redeploy linguistic and thematic material from their classical predecessors.[73] These methodologies have borne fruit in work on Milton and Marvell, as well as in Victoria Moul's articles on Horatian and Ovidian echoes in parts of the *Plantarum*.[74] In looking at classical intertextuality in the *Plantarum* in its entirety, this thesis draws on and develops the work of these and other scholars for the sophistication and nuance of the readings of ancient authors found in Early Modern English neo-Latin texts.

However, much work remains to be done on English neo-Latin literature of the period, whether in print or in manuscript, which for the most part remains unedited and uncatalogued: scholarship on these texts will shed much-needed light on Cowley's engagement with the Latin poetry of his contemporaries, including important figures such as Herbert, Thomas Vaughan, Crashaw and Mildmay Fane.[75] A large quantity of material with direct bearing on the *Plantarum* still awaits more detailed study, notably the tradition of poems on near-contemporary events which includes Campion's *Ad Thamesin* (1595), the Gunpowder Plot epigrams and epyllia, and Payne Fisher's *Marston Moor*; and the Latin or multi-lingual university anthologies of occasional pieces.[76] The extent of the intertextual relationships within the corpus of neo-Latin poetry is only now beginning to be widely recognised, and will further inform the study of Latin works of the period.[77]

In attempting to write meaningfully and usefully on this complex and understudied work, I have found myself compelled to address only tangentially themes and topics which deserve more detailed scrutiny. I have chosen to focus on the seventeenth-century literary and political context of the work, and its intertextual engagement with those authors of the classical canon who were invoked most frequently in that context, namely Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Lucan. Future work will no doubt explore productively the *Plantarum* as a scientific text, and specifically the relationship with the *De Rerum Natura* suggested by the extensive seventeenth-century interest in Lucretius and in Epicureanism more generally, an interest which to a great extent emanated from the French intellectual circles to which Cowley had access while in Paris in the 1640s and 1650s.[78]

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[73] Houghton and Manuwald 2012: 4-5; Haan 2014; Moul 2017: 3-5. On the methodologies of classical reception studies see e.g. Cheney and Hardie 2015: xii, where 'reception' is conceived as 'a dynamic activity in which meaning is constantly generated and regenerated, rather than simply received.'

[74] Milton: Revard 1997; Haan 1998 and 2012; Hale 2005. Marvell: Haan 2003. Cowley: Moul 2012 and 2015a. See also (on Cowley's *Davideis*) Hardie 2012; (on Campion) Manuwald 2012.

[75] Recent surveys of the current state of scholarship can be found in Haan 2015 and Porter 2014a and 2014b. Books and edited volumes on British neo-Latin include Bradner 1940; Binns 1974 and 1990; Money 1998; Houghton and Manuwald 2012. Herbert: Drury and Moul 2015; Gilmore 2009; Knight 2012.

[76] On Campion: Vivian 1909; on Gunpowder Plot poetry, see Haan 2015: 234, 236. Fisher, see Moul 2016 and 2017b. Relevant and as yet unedited university anthologies include *Irenodia Cantabrigiensis* (1641, to which Cowley was a contributor), the *Musarum Oxoniensum Epibateria Serenissimae Reginarum Mariae* (1643) and the *Academiae Cantabrigiensis Sostra, sive, Ad Carolum II reducem* (1660), See Money 2015: 80-83.

[77] See e.g. Moul 2013 and 2015c; Pieper 2008; Houghton 2013 and 2017; Haig Gaisser 1993: 193-254.

[78] On Early Modern Lucretianism, see Barbour and Preston 2015: 472-3; Gillespie 2007: 242-53; Hopkins 2007; Goldberg 2009; C. Smith 1996. Victoria Moul has noted the Lucretian intertext in

5 Genre

5.1 The Didactic Genre

In focusing on the contemporary, and above all political, resonance of the *Plantarum*, I do not deny the scientific seriousness of the work, nor is my reading fundamentally divergent from that of modern scholarship, which is virtually unanimous in describing the *Plantarum* as a 'didactic poem.'[79] Cowley's literary executor Thomas Sprat, however, instead emphasised the generic variety of the work:

> Horum *primi* duo oratione sunt modica & molli, ut elegos decet, sed ingenio vegeto, & forti. In *duobus proximis Horatii* omnia carmina, & numerosam foelicitatem effinxit. Cuius summi Authoris non solum *Epoda*, sed & *Epistolas* & *Sermones* imitatus est, facetissimum, omnium Antiquorum scribendi genus. In *duobus postremis* Pede *Heroico* usus est; &, absit verbo invidia, si non *Virgilium*, caeteros certe omnes superavit.
>
> The first two of these are of a moderate and gentle diction, as befits elegy, but of strong and vigorous invention. In the next two he fashioned all the odes of Horace, and their metrical felicity: of this supreme author he imitated not only the *Epodes*, but also the *Epistles* and *Satires*, the most witty type of writing of all the ancients. In the last two he used the heroic metre, and, let it be said without boasting, if he did not surpass Virgil, he certainly did all the others.
>
> Sprat, *De Vita*, sig. a5^{r}.

'Didactic' was neither a classical nor a Renaissance critical term, and there is considerable variation in its respective application by classicists, neo-Latinists, and English literary scholars. The *Plantarum* certainly does not comfortably belong within the didactic genre identified by some classical scholars: there is no pedagogical authorial voice, nor is the work structured around the explicit imparting of a body of knowledge; its use of *prosopopoeia* is strikingly at odds with other examples of the genre.[80] The alternative (and currently predominant) view of didactic, in the sense of factual or instructional poetry, is as a sub-genre of hexameter poetry.[81] This definition does not readily accommodate the *Plantarum*'s metrical variety or lack of overall structural unity. If anything, the work's opening words, *infima*

Myrrha's description of conception (*Plantarum* 2.1151-81; Moul, *EEBO Introductions*). For Cowley's engagement with continental intellectual circles, see D'Addario 2010: 121; C. Smith 1996: 188-200

[79] Thus 'his Latin didactic poem' (Lindsay 2004); Hofmann 1994: 627; Moul, *EEBO Introductions*. Leicester Bradner, by contrast, argues for the dominance of the poem's mythological content: 'Instead of being a scientific treatise in verse, where the main emphasis is on instruction, Cowley's work is actually a mythological poem in which the plants are personified and the description of their medicinal qualities is overshadowed in the reader's mind by accounts of their metamorphoses drawn from Ovid and by strange tales from Pliny.' (Bradner 1940: 119). Monreal also emphasises the poem's divergence from the didactic genre, this time on formal grounds (Monreal 2010: 9).

[80] For definitions of classical didactic which focus on specific formal features, see e.g. Volk 2002: 36-40; Dalzell 1996: 21-26 and 42-43; D. Fowler 2000: 205-219.

[81] Didactic as a sub-genre of hexameter epic Gale 1994: 103; Toohey 2013: 5-6. Hardie 1986: 193-219 shows the importance of epic themes and structures in Lucretius. A useful summary of modern attempts to define a genre of classical didactic can be found in Haskell 1999: 8-9. Joseph Farrell's highlighting of gaps between classical genre theory and poetic practice provides a helpful nuancing of the issue (Farrell 2003). Not all didactic poems were in elegiacs or hexameters: at least one is known in hendecasyllables (Johannes Dampierre, *De regimine virginum* (c. 1640-50); see Ijsewijn and Sacré 1998: 41-2). Cowley's combination of lyric with elegiacs is very unusual, though not completely unique: compare for example the polymetric *Hospitis Alexii principis Romani gesta sacrosancta* of the Tyrolean poet Iulio Perotti (1666). I am very grateful to Florian Schaffenrath for the reference.

regna cano, steer the reader towards hexameter epic, with their echo of the *Aeneid*'s *arma virumque cano* rather than the *quid faciat* of the *Georgics*. Neo-Latinists apply the term to all primarily factual poetry, irrespective of metre, and above all to two distinct, though related, groupings: the Virgilian works of the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance humanists, and the great corpus of Jesuit didactic from the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[82] Again, neither of these groupings readily accommodates the *Plantarum*, since both typically follow the classical model of direct addressee and overtly instructional authorial voice.[83] The use of the term by English literary scholars is still more general, denoting poetry or prose in which an instructional purpose can be discerned, and is often used with reference to work of little perceived literary interest.[84]

The didactic character of the *Plantarum* lies, first, in the deep-seated Renaissance belief that the value of all poetry was to 'delight and instruct', as claimed by Horace in the *Ars Poetica.*[85] This Early Modern insistence on the instructional function of poetry, and indeed literature in general, has been demonstrated by studies of contemporary reading habits, and by the examination of marginalia and commonplace books.[86] The centrality of the classical poetic canon to humanist education (above, p. 18) further heightened the pedagogical function of poetry, which could be deployed with considerable sophistication, as Andrew Wallace has shown in his study of the use of Virgil in the Early Modern classroom.[87] Moreover, as Claire Preston's recent work has demonstrated, not only was instruction a key feature of literature, but the literary was by no means deemed inappropriate to scientific writing.[88]

The *Plantarum*, then, is didactic in the sense that all Early Modern poetry is didactic; but it has a further instructional quality, which lies in its scientific seriousness and in its use of a mode of reflection, inspired by the *Georgics*, and deriving from the close observation of the natural world.[89] Like Virgil's poem, it couples this observation with a more general social and

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[82] See particularly Haskell 2014, which treats neo-Latin didactic poetry as a distinct genre, recognising its metrical diversity and its various allegiances to Lucretius, the *Ars Poetica*, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* and to Manilius' *Astronomica*, as well as to the *Georgics*. For Moul, neo-Latin didactic poetry is a de facto genre rather than one consciously conforming to particular conventions (Moul 2017: 182); Schaffenrath 2015 treats didactic as a branch of epic. For a survey of the field, see also Ijsewijn and Sacré 1998: 38-45. There is now a substantial literature on Renaissance Italian didactic: see especially Roellenbleck 1975. On Jesuit didactic, see Haskell 2003. On imitation of the *Georgics*, see Ludwig 1982.

[83] Haskell 2014; Monreal 2010: 9.

[84] See e.g. Barbour and Preston 2015: 461-462.

[85] Horace, *Ars Poetica* 333-334; 343-344. Rutherford 2007: 259-60. See also Moul 2017: 180; Dalzell 1996: 9-11. On the other hand, the purely instructive, lacking poetic fiction (mimesis), might not be considered poetry at all: Aristotle, *Poetics* 1447b13-20.

[86] The foundational study is Jardine and Grafton 1990; see also R. Ingram 2003: 63-78; Beal 1993: 131-147.

[87] Wallace 2010. See Moul 2017: 180-181; Haskell 1999: 9-11. On humanist pedagogy, see Mack 2014: 55-61.

[88] Preston 2015: 9-23.

[89] 'The poem [the *Georgics*] creates a double movement: particulars serve as allegories of human problems and values, while allegories are inhabited by things with their particular tasks, objects, and (sometimes colliding) perspectives.' (Batstone 1997: 125.)

political engagement. Combining factual subject-matter and its wealth of learned footnotes with historical and mythological narrative, with dramatic interplay between the plants, and with political reflections which run in counterpoint to the botanical information, Cowley's work is one in which the natural world is closely intertwined both with the classical tradition and with contemporary events. Nor is it unique in its broad engagement with Virgil's poem: whereas the *Georgics* could be used as a model for instructional verse by Early Modern poets writing in Latin, Virgil's poem was by no means exclusively read in this way.[90] In the classroom, the *Georgics* were used pedagogically to provide models of the process of teaching and learning, not as a husbandry manual.[91] More generally, Renaissance criticism praised the *Georgics* for their 'middle style' which succeeded in combining factual material with political, philosophical and moral digressions, in an example of the 'generic hybridisation' identified in Barbara Lewalski's work on genre theory.[92]

Once the *Plantarum* is untied from the Procrustean bed of a narrow and highly contested definition of didactic, its departures from the genre begin to recede in favour of its affinities, and the work aligns itself more smoothly with other literature conventionally assigned to the genre. Its medical content resonates with works such as Fracastoro's *Syphilis* (1521), on the disease of that name, and Claude Quillet's *Callipaedia* (1655), on the conception and gestation of beautiful children; George Buchanan's *De Sphaera* (1586) is a British work engaging with contemporary science, though in this case with a view to refuting Copernicus' new theory of the universe.[93] Nonetheless, comparison with Rapin's near-contemporary *Hortorum Libri IV* (1665) highlights the difference between the *Plantarum* and more straightforwardly Virgilian didactic of the type described by Ludwig.[94] Rapin's work sits at the beginning of the Jesuit didactic tradition and belongs recognisably both to that tradition and to that of the Italian didactic works which preceded it. The work is firmly modelled on the *Georgics*, in its number of books and its metre as well as its diction, and explicitly takes up the Virgilian baton held out at *Georgics* 4.147-148; it overtly presents itself as an instruction manual.[95] Shorter than Cowley's work, the *Hortorum* both conforms more nearly to the 'didactic' template and lacks the English work's thematic and metrical diversity.[96]

To read the *Plantarum* as an example of a specific 'didactic' genre is to risk overlooking many of the distinctive features of the work, including the highly entertaining interplay of the plants themselves, the immense intertextual range, the significance of the narrative digressions and, perhaps most importantly, the contemporary political and social resonance

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[90] *Georgics* and neo-Latin didactic: Haskell 2014: 438-439. For other ways in which the *Georgics* could be read, see particularly Wallace 2010: 123-177; Wilson-Okamura 2010: 77-100.
[91] Wallace 2010: 123-125.
[92] Fowler 1986; Wilson-Okamura 2010: 77-100; Lewalski 1999: 115. Lewalski regards hexameter epic as a 'heterocosm' capable of comprehending all available themes and genres.
[93] Fracastoro: Eatough 1984; Quillet 1656; Buchanan: Ruddiman and Burman 1725. See further Haan 2015: 437.
[94] Ludwig 1982.
[95] Compare Haskell 2014: 438-439.
[96] Monreal 2010: 9.

of much of the factual material. I turn now to the question of the work's more general didactic character, in terms of the seriousness of intent of the scientific content, and the interplay of that content with the work's wider engagement.

5.2 The *Plantarum* and Didactic Purpose

> [...] we want good Poets [...] who have purposely treated of solid and learned, that is, Natural Matters [...]
>
> Cowley, A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy, p. 46.[97]

Cowley's own interest in educational theory is shown in his essay 'On Agriculture' (1668), which calls for a college for the teaching of agriculture, and in the *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy* (1661), a detailed proposal for the establishment of such a college, in which the teaching of agriculture is envisaged as part of an education which embraces the study of all branches of experimental science.[98]

Given that Latin was the international language of scientific writing, it is not surprising that Cowley accepts that instruction in Latin must form an important part of the foundation stages of education.[99] But he is critical of the methods used:

> [...] it is deplorable to consider the loss which Children make of their time at most Schools, employing, or rather casting away six or seven years in the learning of words only, and that too very imperfectly: [...]
>
> A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy, p. 45.[100]

He instead proposes that Latin be taught through the medium of texts with a significant scientific content:

> That a Method be here established for the infusing Knowledge and Language at the same time into them; and that this may be their Apprenticeship in Natural Philosophy. This we conceive may be done, by breeding them up in Authors, or pieces of Authors, who treat of some parts of Nature, and who may be understood with as much ease and pleasure, as those which are commonly taught
>
> A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy, pp. 45-46.[101]

Cowley's list of authors includes Varro, Cato, Columella, Pliny, Celsus, Nemesianus (here misspelled as Nenesianus), selections from Cicero and Seneca, the *Georgics*, Manilius, and, probably, Grattius; in Greek, Nicander, Oppian, parts of Aristotle, Theophrastus and Dioscorides.[102] He is, however, forced to recognise that his list is heavily weighted towards prose writers:

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[97] Cowley 1661.
[98] Cowley 1661; 'fn Agriculture', *Works* (1668). See further M. E. Green 1986: 71-72; Parry 1992: 145-146; Low 1985: 129-130.
[99] Cowley 1661: 45-51. Waquet 2001: 82-83; Ogilvie 2015.
[100] Text from Cowley 1661.
[101] The gap between 'Things and Words' (verba and res) was a key feature of humanist educational debate: see Wallace 2010: 132, who cites the opening of Erasmus' *De ratione studii* as 'the seminal account of the connection.'
[102] Victoria Moul suggests that the 'Grotius' of the printed text be emended to Grattius, often paired with Nemesianus. No text by Grotius immediately lends itself to study of the kind envisaged by Cowley here.

> [...] we want good Poets (I mean we have but few) who have purposely treated of solid and learned, that is, Natural Matters (the most part indulging to the weakness of the world, and feeding it either with the follies of Love, or with the Fables of gods and Heroes) [...]
>
> A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy, p. 46.

The *Proposition* was published in 1661; the first two books of the *Plantarum* in 1662. It is tempting to read the *Plantarum* as a way of filling this gap, of providing a Latin verse text which would enable students to study 'Things as well as Words', increasing their proficiency in the language while at the same time exposing them to material he considered worthy of study.[103] This hypothesis is not without its difficulties: 'Water-Lily', for example (1.516-606), contains both 'the follies of Love' and 'the Fables of gods and Heroes' in abundance; and it is hard to envisage a classroom of teenage boys diligently parsing the gynaecological material of book 2. But it raises the possibility that at least part of Cowley's vision for the *Plantarum* was as a school text, and that its author is to be regarded as one of those 'who treat of some parts of Nature, and who may be understood with as much ease and pleasure, as those which are commonly taught.'

Poetry and instruction, delighting and informing, are closely interwoven in Cowley's *Praefatio* (headed *Lectori* in the 1662 edition).[104] It opens with a conventional yoking-together of form and function, familiar from the *Ars Poetica*, with Cowley's announcement of his intention to celebrate the beauty and uses of plants (*tantam pulchritudinem, tantasque virtutes*, 'such great beauty and such great virtues', *Praefatio* 1, sig. b2^{r}).[105] Cowley expresses surprise that the subject of plants has not been treated poetically; he makes no great claim for his work but hopes, in a well-worn poetic trope, that his name may be read carved on a few tree-trunks or written on a few flowers:

> *Satìs mihi honorì fore putabo si paucis incisum Truncis nomen meum, vel (quod Regale esse dicitur) paucis Floribus inscriptum legatur.*
>
> I will consider it a sufficient honour for me, if my name be read carved on a few tree-trunks, or (which is said to be a royal honour), written on a few flowers.
>
> *Praefatio*, 1, sig. b2^{v}.

In an extended metaphor, he compares the process of composition with the preparation of herbal remedies:

> *Itaque nè tot quidem germina colligata in hunc fasciculum videbis, quot unius Medicamenti compositionem aliquando ingrediuntur; & bìnos hosce Libellulos tanquam exiguas tibi Pillulas offere videor, ex diversarum Herbularum quasi farragine confectas & nitore quodam styli deauratas, quarum quidem ìn delectu non ità multùm laboravi, sed velut sorte ductis aut fortuitò oblatis contentus fui, quia nulla ferè sit quae non abundè succorum possit effundere, si apto modo & artificiosè exprimantur; neque ullam certè invenies tam ieiunam & tam sterilem, ut materiam nequeat ad Librum integrum, si bene excutiatur, copiosissimè suppeditare. Modus autem mihi maximè genuinus & proprius huic operae videtur, non ut illarum vires crudâ*

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[103] M. E. Green 1986: 72; Moul 2017: 180-181.
[104] Note also the shift in emphasis from reader to writer generated by the change of title, which casts the preface as an authorial meditation rather than as an injunction to the reader.
[105] Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 333-334: *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae/aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae.*

simplicìque enumeratione tanquam in pilâ simul contundantur; sed ut lento poeticarum ambagum igne lenìque tormento quasi distillando evocentur.

> And so you will see not even as many plants bound together in this nosegay as at times go into the composition of a single medicine; and I seem to offer you this pair of little books as though they were tiny tablets, put together as it were from a mash of different herbs and gilded with a certain brightness of the pen, in whose selection indeed I have not laboured very much, but have been content as though they were drawn by lot or presented by chance, because there is almost none which would not be able to pour out an abundance of juices, if they be only suitably and skilfully expressed; nor, to be sure, will you find any plant so unproductive and barren as to be unable to provide in profusion the material for a whole book, if it be well shaken out. Now the most right and proper method of going about this task seems to me, not that their powers be pounded together as though in a mortar, in a rough and simple catalogue, but that they should be called forth, as though by distillation in the slow fire and gentle pressure of the poetic alembic.
>
> *Praefatio* 1, sig. $b2^{v}$-$b3^{r}$.

Literary metaphors (*nitore styli, materiam ad librum integrum*) jostle with medical ones (*medicamenti, pillulas, farragine*).[106] At times the identification between book and medicine appears a smooth one – the two books are to be regarded as little pills; every plant provides both medical and literary material in abundance. However, a disjunction becomes apparent when Cowley updates Lucretius' cup of medicine smeared with honey (*De Rerum Natura* 4.11-25) to the image of gilded pills (*deauratas*).[107] In the seventeenth century, pills were coated in a mould with gold or silver to render them palatable.[108] But it is the pen which gilds Cowley's pills (*nitore styli*), an incongruity which emphasises the specifically literary activity of the poet and reveals the non-equivalence of poetry and medicine.

Moreover, Cowley proceeds to explain that his plants have not been crudely ground up in a mortar, but distilled in the slow fire and gentle pressure of poetic circumlocution.[109] The metaphor recalls Early Modern discussion of the practice of *imitatio*, which depicted it as an actively transformative process; more specifically, it alludes to the alchemical analogy deployed by Jonson.[110] Furthermore, it provides a clear signal as to the work's sophisticated literary aspirations. At the same time, the transformative nature of the process of distillation raises questions about the relationship of the raw material to the final product. This question is further sharpened by Cowley's discussion of the relationship between poetry and truth. He is concerned that he may be charged with fictionalising the qualities of his plants *ad pompam atque inanem voluptatem uberiorem* ('for splendour and an empty and over-luxurious pleasure', 2):

> *Nam quia nobis aliquando mentiri concessum est, eâque libertate immodestè abutuntur aliqui, ità in totum fides omnis abrogatur ut non sine haesitatione credatur cùm dicimus,*

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[106] 'farrago' is also used of satire: Juvenal 1.86, Persius 5.77.
[107] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 4.11-25.
[108] Bela 2006.
[109] The English version, by an unknown translator (Tate?) reads 'but as it were in a Lymbeck, by the gentle Heat of Poetry, to distil and extract their Spirits.' (*Works* (1689), sig. $b1^{v}$.) *Ambages* is used of the twists and turns of the alembic as well as metaphorically.
[110] Peterson 1981: 25. Cowley deploys another very common metaphor for literary imitation when he compares himself to a bee at *Plantarum* 1.29-32: see Pigman 1980: 3-8. Horace, *Odes* 4.2; *Epistles* 1.1; Seneca *Epistles* 84.5-7. Jonson deploys the image in *Timber: Or, Discoveries* (2466-2482).

O Laërtiade, quicquid dicam, aut erit, aut non.

Hor. Serm. 2.5

> For because we are allowed to tell lies on occasion, and because some of us wantonly abuse that freedom, all trust is completely annulled, so that not without hesitation are we believed when we say "O son of Laertes, whatever I say either will be or won't" (Horace, *Satires* 2.5).
>
> *Praefatio* 2, sig. b3^{v}.[111]

To refute this criticism, Cowley invokes his use of footnotes, which are to demonstrate the factual basis of his poetry. To the modern reader, these footnotes are one of the most remarkable features of the work. Predominantly in Latin, but making liberal use of Greek and, on rare occasions, Hebrew, they make their presence felt on virtually every page of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* until they drop away in the second half of book 6.[112] Including information from classical, medieval and Early Modern sources, and from prose texts as well as the poetry of Ovid and Virgil, they give details of the botanical and pharmacological properties of the plants and record contemporary controversies, particularly over nomenclature and identification.[113] Cowley's ancient sources include the *Historia Plantarum* of Theophrastus (c.371-c.287 BC), the *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides (c 40-90 AD), the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD), and the works of Galen (129-c.200/c.216 AD), all of which were foundational texts in the new Early Modern science of botany.[114] By far the most frequently-cited Renaissance authority is the French physician Jean Fernel (1497-1558); of contemporary writers, most prominent is John Parkinson (1567-1650), Royal Botanist to Charles I, whose *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* (1629) had been dedicated to Henrietta Maria.[115] Cowley explains that he has selected prose authors for their reliability, favouring Pliny and Fernel as respective examples of ancient and modern scientific writing (*Praefatio* 2, sig. b3^{v}).

These prose footnotes, printed as endnotes in the 1662 *PLD* and as true footnotes in the *Poemata Latina* of 1668, anchor the verse text in its factual subject-matter; but by their very existence they draw attention to the different modes of writing. Later editors seem to have found them problematic: the editor of the 1689 English translation, Nahum Tate, removed the vast majority of the notes, a decision apparently arising from his desire to emphasise the poetic invention of the work at the expense of its factual content:

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[111] The allusion to Horace (*Satires* 2.5.59) is itself suggestive. Horace's poem is set in the Underworld, where Tiresias presents Ulysses with a series of disreputable stratagems for obtaining wealth. Cowley's comparison of the poet with Tiresias thus further undermines poetic seriousness. But, as Colin Burrow has shown, Early Modern readers associated Ulysses with exile and displacement (Burrow 1993: 45). This association anticipates the *PLD*'s treatment of exile and alienation, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

[112] The absence of footnotes in the closing section of the poem may reflect the departure from the subject of plants or, as Professor Kinney has suggested in correspondence, be indicative of the work's incomplete state. See Moul 2015a: 223-5.

[113] One such example is the uncertainty as to the identification of the ancient hyacinth, discussed by Cowley in the footnote to 4.229.

[114] Reeds 1976: 519-527. See Monreal 2010: 206.

[115] Parkinson 1629. See Monreal 2010: 206-209; Tigner 2012: 191-193; Bushnell 2003: 58-63.

> In the main he has but a barren Province to cultivate, where the Soil was to be enrich'd by the Improvements of Art and Fancy. He must so frequently descend to such minute Descriptions of Herbs and Flowers, which administer so feeble occasions for Thought, and unfurnished of Variety, that since the enumerations are no where tedious, but every thing made beautiful and entertaining, it must be wholly ascribed to the Faculty of the Artist, with a *Materiam superavit Opus*.
>
> Tate, 'Address to the Reader', sig. a2^{v}.[116]

The editor of the first online edition of the *Plantarum*, Dana Sutton, follows Tate's practice, remarking in the introductory material on the 'judicious prun[ing]' of 1689.[117] Sutton is clear that, for the modern reader, the literary interest of the verse can be cleanly separated from the scientific content of the prose footnotes:

> since I imagine most modern readers will come to De Plantis [sic] as a work of literature rather than for botanical instruction [...] I have, by and large, omitted Cowley's own annotative material and limited myself to that provided by his translators.
>
> Sutton, 'Introduction'.[118]

Joseph Wallace's work on the *Davideis* has argued that the annotations to that work represent an attempt to demonstrate a unity between Biblical and poetic truth.[119] Similarly, we should read Cowley's footnotes to the *Plantarum* as arguing for the firm basis of his poetry in the observed features of the natural world and in the cultural tradition from which those observations derive. This mode of reading is reinforced by the *Praefatio*, which presents poetry and instruction as closely knit together. In a passage of apparent modesty, Cowley uses a trope familiar from classical didactic, the image of a journey through a field of knowledge; at the same time, the emphasis on the untrodden path which that journey will take represents a claim to poetic innovation, in a form whose articulation stretches back to Callimachus.[120]

> *Notas autem breves placuit subjungere, non eruditionis ostentandae gratiâ [...] sed quia praeter ipsos Medicos (quos ego non docere velle, sed oblectare, prae me fero) non ità multi fortasse Lectores invenientur qui in historiis Plantarum satìs sint versati ad ipsa aliquarum nomina intelligenda. Est enim pars quaedam Philosophiae extra publicas plateas aut itinera usitata, inter avia atque inculta doctrinae ferè posita. His igitur mihi vicem Lexici supplere visum est.*
>
> Now I have decided to add some brief supplementary notes, not to show off my learning [...] but because apart from doctors themselves (whom, I declare plainly, I do not wish to instruct, but to delight) there will perhaps not be so many readers found who are sufficiently acquainted with the histories of the plants to understand even the names of some of them. For it is a branch of philosophy that lies outside the public promenades or the well-travelled routes, situated almost among the trackless and untilled regions of learning. Therefore for these people it seemed to me a good idea to fulfil the role of a lexicon.
>
> *Praefatio* 1, sig. b3^{r}.

When the poet claims that his goal is to delight rather than instruct, and that footnotes are provided merely for explanatory purposes, the false modesty is exposed by the ambition

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[116] *Works* (1689),
[117] Sutton 2006/7.
[118] Sutton 2006/7. Sutton directs the interested reader to the online edition of Cowley's notes at Kinney 2007.
[119] Wallace 2015: 896-897.
[120] Fowler 2000: 206-208; Harder 1990: 288.

inherent in the preceding image of the didactic journey along the untrodden path. In *Odes* 4.2 – already invoked by Cowley with the image of the bee – Horace unfavourably compared himself to Pindar as a means of preparing the reader for his Pindaric engagement later in the book.[121] Similarly, Cowley's explicit disavowal of didactic intent is undercut by a familiar metaphor of instructional poetry, which in turn evokes the self-referential poetics of the Hellenistic tradition. And with the Horatian coupling of instruction and delight (*non docere velle, sed oblectare*), Cowley gestures towards the expectation that poetry will incorporate the didactic, in its broadest sense.[122]

The defence of the inclusion of Ovidian myths is similarly framed in terms of the relationship of his poetry to its factual content (*Praefatio* 6). Cowley argues that the incredible cannot be regarded as deliberate untruth, and that his subject-matter has demanded Ovidian adornment in order for it to be effectively displayed:

> *Quod autem aliquando Deorum nomina & Transformationum fabulae intermisceantur, ipsa profectò materia me coegit invitum ut id facerem, quae aliâ ratione noluit splendescere, si hâc modo splendeat. Nulla picta vestis nativo Veritatis habitu vivísque coloribus pulchrior existimanda est; sed aliquibus personis & aliquo in loco potest esse convenientior.*
>
> Now as for the fact that, at times, the names of gods and stories of metamorphoses are interspersed, assuredly the subject-matter itself put pressure on me to do this, even though I was unwilling, subject-matter which refused to shine by another method, if only it can shine in this way. No embroidered clothing is to be thought more beautiful than the native dress and lively colours of truth, but it can be more appropriate for some people and in some situations.
>
> *Praefatio* 6, sig. b6^{r}.

Here Cowley deploys the Lucretian argument for the necessity of making his work attractive to his audience, but also acknowledges that the poetic opportunities offered by classical myth were too tempting to ignore. With this painstaking justification of the combination of the technical with the creative, Cowley reveals his awareness of the generic audacity of his endeavour.

Victoria Moul makes a strong case for the didactic seriousness of the *Plantarum*, at least in its first four books, arguing for Cowley's development of a poetics which delivers instruction via striking modes of verse expression.[123] The argument of my thesis is that Cowley draws on his own botanical and medical study to engage closely with the observed natural world and with contemporary scientific debate, and that this engagement provides a means of reflecting upon and illuminating the events of the recent past and the changed character of Restoration England. As scholars have read in Virgil's *Georgics* a didacticism lying in the broader meditations enabled by the poem's account of husbandry, so do Cowley's plants provide a means of articulating the pressing political questions of the day.[124]

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[121] See R. Thomas 2011: 104; G. Davis 1991: 133-143.
[122] This false modesty is a characteristically Horatian trope: see e.g. S. Harrison 2007: 28-31.
[123] See especially Moul 2012: 100-101; Moul 2015a: 223.
[124] Batstone 1997: 125-126.

6 The *Plantarum Libri Duo* and the *Poemata Latina*

The subject of this thesis is the *Plantarum Libri Sex* in its entirety, and the edition under discussion will be that of the 1668 *Poemata Latina*, from which all citations are drawn.[125] Before addressing this volume in detail, however, I shall include some preliminary discussion of the 1662 *Plantarum Libri Duo*, which, unlike the later *Poemata Latina*, was produced under Cowley's own supervision.

6.1 *A. Couleii Plantarum: Libri Duo* (1662)[126]

The first two books of the *Plantarum* were published in London in 1662 by Nathaniel Brooke, a publisher specialising in medical and scientific works, and perhaps best known for his battle over the posthumous rights to the work of the herbalist Nicholas Culpeper.[127] The title-page includes an epigraph from Ovid: *habeo quod* [sic] *carmine sanet et herbis* (*Metamorphoses* 10.397). In their original context, the words are spoken by Myrrha's nurse, as she attempts to relieve her mistress' distress, unaware that the cause is Myrrha's incestuous passion for her father. This epigraph, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, anticipates the long speech by the metamorphosed Myrrha which closes book 2; it also programmatically states the poem's function as a work of healing, and implies that the healing power lies in the poetry itself as much as in the herbs whose uses the work describes. The story of Myrrha's illicit love in *Metamorphoses* 10 forms part of a wider narrative of transgressive sexuality, which will find an echo in the shifting gender identities of book 2 of the *Plantarum.*

With the dedicatory elegy to Trinity College, Cambridge, which follows the title page, Cowley celebrates the reinstatement of the fellowship lost during the Civil War, and provides an implicit contrast to the circumstances of the 1656 *Poems*, dedicated to the University of Cambridge during his period of exile.[128] Next comes Cowley's Latin preface, addressed simply '*Lectori'* ('to the reader'), and ending with a hexameter poem justifying the resumption of poetry. This is followed by the Latin text of the first two books, annotated throughout with Cowley's prose footnotes.

Very little is known about the reception of this publication. Cowley himself presented copies to the Bodleian Library, to his former headmaster Richard Busby, and to the royal physician Sir Alexander Fraizer, recipients who neatly encapsulate the books' scholarly, medical and Royalist content.[129] Since books 3-6 remained unpublished at the time of

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[125] Cowley 1668a.
[126] Cowley 1662.
[127] Furdell 2002: 44-45. Appropriately, in view of the gynaecological content of book 2, Brooke was also the publisher of *The Compleat Midwifes Practice* (1656). See Fissell 2006: 183.
[128] The Latin version of the first book of the *Davideis*, which closes *Poems*, provides a further sense of continuity between the two publications.
[129] Nethercot 1931: 224.

Cowley's death in 1667, reference to the *Plantarum* in the various elegies published on that occasion must be to the first two books and hence provide some evidence of their early reception. Denham's elegy compares Cowley to Virgil and therefore probably alludes to the hexameter *Davideis* rather than the elegiac *Plantarum* 1-2; but it is possible to read a reference to the work in the elegiac epigram of William Speede, which prophesies stellification for the poet *vireat dum planta per agros* ('as long as the plant grows green in the fields').[130] Specific mention of *Plantarum* 1-2 is found in William Peers' elegy on Cowley's death, where it is described as a 'garden'; the allusion is reinforced by the use elsewhere in the poem of imagery of flowers and medicinal herbs:

> Though vain's the Zeal which Richest Gums bestows,
> Or strews the Flowers of no common Verse,
> For his each leaf does noble sweets disclose,
> And his own Garden best adorn his Herse.
>
> Those happy Simples rescue from the Grave,
> When Physicks Rules but empty succours bring.
> From their fresh bloom his constant Glories have
> A lovely Verdure and a lasting Spring.
>
> Richard Peers, 'To the Memory of the Incomparable Mr. Abraham Cowley, Lately Deceased', 17-24.[131]

6.2 *Poemata Latina* (1668)

The 1668 volume is a bibliographically complex one, consisting as it does of material from the 1662 *Plantarum Libri Duo* yoked together with the four books which Cowley left in manuscript, plus Sprat's *De Vita*. Cowley's will, dated September 1665, had given Sprat *carte blanche* in the preparation of his work for the press.[132] Despite Sprat's evident concern to manage Cowley's posthumous reputation, it seems likely that his editorial involvement in the actual text of the *Plantarum* was minimal.[133] Sprat himself claims that he found nothing to offend in Cowley's work, and the text itself bears no obvious signs of editorial interference.[134] The narrative structure of books 3-6 is complete, and the volume and organisation of footnotes, until their disappearance in the second half of book 6, suggests a text well on the way to publication.[135] Although in theory it remains possible that 'sensitive' passages have been seamlessly removed, in the absence of any evidence we can only assume that the extant text is the poet's.

The *Poems* of 1656 had been issued by the Royalist publisher Humphrey Moseley; following Moseley's death in 1661, the copyright was acquired by Henry Herringman (1628-

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[130] Denham 1667; Speede 1669.
[131] Peers 1667.
[132] Quoted by Nethercot 1931: 296-297.
[133] P. Davis 2008: 110-117 and Darcy 2013: 26-31 both highlight the extent to which Sprat's *Life* (the expanded English version of the *De Vita*) functions as a public relations exercise.
[134] *Works* (1668), sig. A1^{r}.
[135] The absence of footnotes after 6.428 may indicate the work's incompleteness; alternatively, it may reflect a shift to epic diction in the final portion of the poem. I am grateful to Professor J. Daniel Kinney for sharing with me his conviction that the *Plantarum* was substantially complete at the time of Cowley's death.

1704), who continued to publish Cowley's English writings for the remainder of his (Herringman's) lifetime.[136] Thus it was under Herringman's imprint that the 1689 English version of the *Plantarum* was to appear. The Latin poetry, however, was entrusted elsewhere, possibly because Herringman's printers lacked the specialist capacity to work with the occasional appearances of Greek and Hebrew text. *Poemata Latina* was published by John Martyn (1617/8-80), publisher to the Royal Society and of Sprat's own *History of the Royal Society* (1667).[137] In choosing Martyn, rather than Brooke (above, p. 34), Sprat was both selecting an eminently respectable scientific publisher and protecting the Cowley 'brand' against unauthorised exploitation such as that of Culpeper by Brooke.[138] And by choosing Martyn over Herringman, Sprat was positioning the work as generically distinct from Cowley's English poetry and signalling the importance of its scientific content.

The frontispiece to the *Poemata Latina* consists of a portrait of Cowley engraved by the Royalist artist William Faithorne. Attired in classical drapery, Cowley looks sidelong at the reader, his face framed with luxuriant Cavalier love-locks, atop a plinth inscribed 'Abrahamus Couleius, *Anglus*.'[139] At this opening moment of the *Plantarum*, the classical austerity of the portrait steers the reader to an expectation of a correspondingly classicising text. This expectation is partially reinforced by the title-page, which begins *Abrahami Couleii Angli, Poemata Latina*, just as Milton's 1645 Latin *Poemata* had been titled *Joannis Miltoni Londiniensis Poemata.*[140] However, the subsequent enumeration of the six books – *duo Herbarum, Florum, Sylvarum* – signals that Cowley's work is grounded in the natural world as well as in the 'republic of letters' of Renaissance humanism. The designation '*Sylvarum*' signals not only a verse miscellany in the tradition of Statius, but also a term increasingly used in scientific writing, notably by Bacon and Evelyn.[141] Moreover, the wording of the title echoes that of René Rapin's 1665 poem on gardens, the *Hortorum libri quattuor*.[142] The title-page thus signals a generic allegiance that encompasses scientific writing and neo-Latin verse, as well as classical antiquarianism.

Beneath the title is the line from *Metamorphoses* 10 which appeared on the title-page of *PLD.* As epigraph to all six books, the verb *sanet* additionally anticipates the political content of book 6, with its emphasis on Charles II as healer of the nation.[143] The title *Libri Plantarum* requires some further probing. The convention in Latin technical writing (though, as demonstrated by Rapin's *Hortorum Libri IV*, one by no means universally applied) was to

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[136] On Herringman's list, see Hammond 2006: 6-7.
[137] Johns 2004.
[138] Furdell 2002: 43-45. The extensive posthumous publication under Culpeper's name of works at best constructed from his notes, at worst entirely spurious, shows how vulnerable the name of a successful author could be to exploitation of this kind.
[139] Similar combinations of the classical and the contemporary can be found in the frontispiece to Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648) and to the posthumous folio edition of Katherine Philips' poetry (1667).
[140] Milton 1645.
[141] See especially De Bruyn 2001: 347-348.
[142] Rapin 1665.
[143] Moul, *EEBO Introductions*: 'Virgil, the Restoration and the "royal doctor"'.

use *De* plus the ablative of the subject.[144] By using the genitive, Cowley makes his work a book 'of' plants. The *Plantarum* is a book of plants in that many of its words belong to the plants themselves; but it is also a book which consists of plants. Through the poet's agency, the herbs, flowers and trees of the physical garden are metamorphosed and contained within his pages.[145]

6.2.1 *De Vita et Scriptis*

Sprat's sketch of Cowley is one of the earliest English literary biographies and remains the starting point for the study of the poet's life.[146] Recent scholarship, however, has recognised the extent to which this biography reflects Sprat's own concerns both to rebut allegations of Cowley's potentially compromised loyalty and cowardly retirement, and to dissociate both the poet and himself from the disreputable circle of Buckingham and Rochester.[147] Consideration of the *De Vita* as prefatory material to the *Plantarum* reveals Sprat's efforts to present the work as the product of a retreat to scholarship in a way which minimises the poem's political energy.

By positioning his life of Cowley immediately after the title page, Sprat provided himself with a powerful opportunity to direct the reception of the work. It is addressed to Martin Clifford (d. 1677), a Westminster and Cambridge near-contemporary of Cowley, and friend of Sprat and Buckingham as well as of the poet.[148] By addressing the *De Vita* to a personal friend, Sprat immediately stresses the private rather than public aspect of Cowley's character. This emphasis is central to Sprat's portrait of Cowley as an unworldly individual, willing to accept the demands of public service when necessary, but at his happiest among his friends in his modest country retreat:

> Ardentius iam urgebat institutum illud suum, quod olim destinaverat, exeundi ex hominum coetu, & tumultu, & vivendi aliquando *in otio cum dignitate*. Octo extremis annis ut plurimum *Rure* delituit. *Urbem & Aulam* rarissime revisit, idque non tanquam *Incola*, sed *Hospes*. In amoenissima Thamesis Ripa, vitae curis & aerumnis solutus, totus Amicis, & severioribus literis vacavit. *Musas* etiam una in solitudinem *comites* adduxit: Sed & simul *Eremitas* fecit deoque consecravit.
>
> There was now pressing upon him more urgently that intention of his, which he had long since settled upon, of departing from the company and tumult of men, and of living at last at leisure, though with honour. In his last eight years, he buried himself in the country as much as possible. He visited the city and the court most infrequently, and when he did, it was not as a resident, but as a guest. On the most delightful bank of the Thames, freed from the worries and tribulations of life, he devoted himself entirely to his friends and to the study of the sciences. He also took the Muses with him into solitude as his companions; but he also made them into hermits, and dedicated them to God.
>
> Sprat, *De Vita*, sig. a3^{r-v}.

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[144] Thus Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, Matthioli's *Compendium de Plantis* (1571), Ferrari's *De Cultura Florum Libri IV* (1633).
[145] This poetic agency is emphasised even more strongly in the 1663 volume, where the title page reads simply A. Couleii *Plantarum Libri Duo* – the book belongs to the plants, but the plants belong to Cowley. See also below on the dedicatory elegy.
[146] Darcy 2013: 26.
[147] P. Davis 2008: 79-104; Darcy 2013: 26-39.
[148] Tarantino 2004.

Bearing in mind that Cowley retired to Barnelmes not, as Sprat implies, in 1660 but three years later, we should note the deliberate elision of Cowley's efforts to secure a court appointment in the early years of the Restoration, as well as of his lucrative theatrical partnership with William Davenant.[149] Sprat's casting of the entirety of the *Plantarum* as the product of Cowley's years of retirement establishes a particular set of reader expectations. Sprat's *Plantarum* is first and foremost a work of scholarship (*severioribus literis*), born of retirement and solitude (*Musas [...] Eremitas fecit*). It is a labour of love (*vitae curis & aerumnis solutus*) which, Sprat implies, was designed for the enjoyment of his friends (*totus Amicis[...] vacavit*) rather than for the wider reading public of the city of court. It is also given a religious colouring, with the Muses transformed into anchoresses (*Eremitas*) and dedicated to God.

Cowley's other major work of the Restoration, the *Several Discourses by Way of Essays, in Verse and Prose* (published posthumously in 1668) similarly presents its author as withdrawn from the world, dedicated to solitude, obscurity and agricultural pursuits.[150] Scholars who have read Cowley's retirement as arising directly from his political marginalisation have linked the persona of the *Essays* with the politically-inflected Royalist trope of retreat of the 1640s and 1650s, which was similarly traditionally interpreted as a turning away from adversity, failure and defeat to a secluded world of intellectual and horticultural activity.[151] More recent scholarship has revealed the tensions, contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the Royalist retirement stance, showing how retirement could itself be a form of engagement.[152] I address these questions with reference to the *Plantarum* in chapter 2.[153]

6.2.2 *Ad Celeberrimum Collegium S. S. Trinitatis*

This dedicatory elegy was composed for *PLD*, and is reproduced unaltered in *Poemata Latina*. The opening alludes to Cowley's reinstatement to his fellowship in 1661:

> Sancta mihi semper Nutrix, & ad ubera cuius
> Iam redeo nimium dulcia paene Senex
>
> My Nurse, for ever sacred to me, to whose breasts, all too sweet, I return now, almost as an old man...
>
> Ad Celeberrimum Collegium S. S. Trinitatis, 1-2.[154]

It continues in an abundance of agricultural and horticultural imagery. The work is described as *Horti Plantaria nostri* (3); Cowley emphasises the poverty of the crop he has

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[149] Nethercot 1931: 194-202.
[150] Pritchard 1983: 372-373, Anselment 1988: 181; Hopkins 1998: 106-107; Scott-Baumann 2013: 109-110.
[151] Røstvig 1962; Miner 1971; Anselment 1988.
[152] See especially Loxley 1997: 215-223; Shifflett 1998: 5; Norbrook 1999: 252-254; Pugh 2010: 7-9.
[153] Scholars who see the *Plantarum* primarily as a work of botanical scholarship include P. Davis 2008: 114; Lindsay 2004; and Preston 2015: 206-208 ('at heart a medical herbal').
[154] *Poemata Latina* sig. b1^{r}.

grown and its unworthiness of the *doctissima Cultrix* (5) to whom it is dedicated, before gracefully concluding:

> Sed tribulos, loliumque, & viles inter avenas
> Si reperis frugis germina pauca bonae
> Haec mea sunt, dicis; haec olim semina cultae
> Mandavi Terrae; caetera sponte tulit.
>
> But if among the thistles, tares and worthless oats you find a few plants of a good crop, you can say: 'These are mine: once I entrusted these seeds to cultivated ground; the rest he bore by himself.'
>
> Ad Celeberrimum Collegium S. S. Trinitatis, 9-12.

The passage is strongly redolent of the New Testament parable of the sower (Matthew 13). Trinity, the *doctissima cultrix,* has planted in the poet the seeds which result in a few decent plants (10) amidst a tangle of weeds. But, despite the elegiac metre, the passage carries Virgilian overtones: of the useless tares of *Georgics* 1.152-4 and the *avena*, the shepherd's oaten pipe of pastoral poetry.[155] The plants that are the poem's subject-matter are thus closely aligned with the nexus of metapoetic imagery centring on plants, though here Cowley is not the farmer tending the crops, but rather the soil in which they grow.[156] With the elision of the distinction between plants and poem, Cowley's ownership of the poem extends into ownership of the plants. As the title of the 1662 edition implied, it is in a very real sense 'Cowley's Book of Cowley's Plants.'

The elegy connects the *Plantarum* with the 1656 *Poems*, as well as providing a programmatic introduction to the work. With its emphasis on return and its imagery of maternity, it looks back to the 1656 Latin dedication, where Cowley compared his forced departure from Cambridge to the removal of a barely-weaned child from its mother.[157] The earlier elegy attributed Cowley's departure to *tempestas publica* ('a political storm', 24); the reader is left to infer that his return comes as a result of that storm's giving way to a more favourable political climate. The work is thus subtly but definitely linked to its political context. By dedicating the *Plantarum* to an academic institution, Cowley signals the academic content of the work; the nods to Virgil invoke the classical tradition and indicate the aesthetic ambition of the poem. With the biblical allusion, Cowley's relationship with Trinity is figured in quasi-spiritual terms: the teachings of his alma mater, like the seed in the parable, have a religious significance; what Cowley describes, with evident false modesty, as 'a few good plants' (10), among the weeds and tares of the mass of his output, show that he, like the fertile ground in Matthew 13, 'heareth the word and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit.'[158] The dedicatory elegy thus embraces both the work's neo-classical leanings and its scientific

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[155] Weeds: *triboli, lolium, steriles avenae*, *Georgics* 1.153-154; *avena* as oaten pipe, see e.g. *Eclogues* 1.2.
[156] This association between poetic and agricultural labour is also found in the *Georgics*, e.g. 1.293-294, 2.412-413. R. Thomas 1988, *ad loc*; Henkel 2007: 253-272.
[157] *Ad Illustrissimam Academiam Cantabrigiensem*, 26-27. In contrast, the dedicatory elegy to *Plantarum* describes the poet as *paene senex* ('almost an old man', 2).
[158] Matthew 13.23, King James Version. The Vulgate reads: *hic est qui verbum audit, et intellegit, et fructum fert*.

content; it makes a claim for religious or spiritual significance; and, by referring to the reinstatement of his fellowship, it alludes to recent political upheavals and hints at the *Plantarum*'s political undertones. Finally, in hoping that some of the poem's content may prove worthy of the poet's *alma mater,* Cowley makes a claim, albeit beneath a self-deprecatory surface, for the intellectual seriousness of the work.

6.3.3 *Praefatio Authoris, Duobus primis Plantarum Libris olim editis, Praemissa*.

Like the elegy to Trinity College, this preface was initially used in the *Plantarum Libri Duo*, and recycled by Sprat to form the author's introduction to all six books in *Poemata Latina*. Cowley opens with the declared intention of being the first poet to celebrate the beauty and uses of plants, *tantam pulchritudinem, tantasque virtutes.*

After remarking on the enormity of his theme, and his own inadequacy to do it justice, Cowley explains that he has provided explanatory footnotes (see above, p. 31). He blames the unhappy times for his fickleness in abandoning the serious work of the *Davideis* (4) and defends himself against the charge of preferring pagan myth to biblical themes: to celebrate the vegetable kingdom is to celebrate the works of God (5-6). Finally he addresses his earlier renunciation of poetry, explaining in the hexameter poem which closes the *Praefatio* that he has been driven back to insanity despite repeatedly drinking a concoction of hellebore, restorer of sanity (7). The poem acts as a light-hearted justification for his reneging on his earlier resolve; with its epistolary form and its theme of poetic renunciation, it recalls the Horace of *Epistles* 1.1 and 2.2.[159] Horace may seem an odd choice for an allusion to head up a work apparently strongly coloured by Ovid: the purpose of the reference here seems to be as a means of strengthening the self-deprecation with which Cowley clothes his return to poetry, and the witty undermining of the work's didactic function with the failure of the self-administered concoction of hellebore.[160] With this reference to the subject of the *Plantarum* in (albeit unsuccessful) action, he proceeds to open the work proper.

Even by the standards of Early Modern printed books, the *Plantarum* opens with a polyphony of voices, each directing the reader towards a subtly different reading of the text and thus somewhat qualifying Genette's concept of the paratext as the product of 'the author and his allies.'[161] Sprat's efforts to present the work as one of scholarly retirement (above, pp. 25-6), flatten the political content of the *Plantarum*, conceding only the Stuart panegyric of book 6:

> Horum *ultimum* Patriae suae laudibus dicavit. In eo etenim civiles *Angliae* Tumultus, *Caroli Primi* calamitates, *Secundi* Reditum, & initia nuperi *Belli Navalis* cecinit; ingenio pari virtuti, & fortitudini *Anglorum.*

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[159] Cowley introduces the verses as ad Amicum scripti doctissimum ingeniosissimúmque ('written to a most learned and intelligent friend', *Praefatio*, sig. b6^{v}.
[160] Horace regularly qualifies his issuing of philosophical and ethical maxims with reference to his own shortcomings: see e.g. S. Harrison 2007: 28-35.
[161] See the discussion in Smith and Wilson 2011: 7-9.

> The last of these he dedicated to the praise of his country. For in it he put into verse England's civil upheavals, the disastrous fate of Charles the First, the return of Charles the Second, and the beginnings of the recent naval war; all with powers of invention equal to the virtue and courage of the English.
>
> Sprat, *De Vita*, sig. a5^{r-v}.

Cowley's *Praefatio*, on the other hand, provides a precise political context for the composition of the first two books, and presents *PLD* as the successor to *Poems*, product of exile and defeat; similarly, the reference to the restored fellowship in the dedicatory elegy directly reflects a general upturn in fortune consequent upon the Restoration. The footnotes both anchor the verse text in its factual source material and simultaneously suggest the different functions performed by the two respective types of discourse. Cowley's own paratexts suggest that the contemporary resonance of the *Plantarum* extends beyond the digressions that close books 3 and 5, and the Civil War narrative of book 6.

7 The *Plantarum* as a Latin poem

The Latinity of the *Plantarum* provides a number of signals to the reader. Its language is indicative of a work of intellectual ambition, distinguished by its academic Latin from the popular herbals dismissively referred to in the *Praefatio* and aligning it on the one hand with the scientific Latin beginning to emerge, not least from the newly-founded Royal Society, and on the other with the great tradition of humanist neo-Latin verse.[162] Writing in Latin represented for English poets a bid to attain an international reach, the best-known instance being Milton's 1645 *Poemata* with its self-conscious positioning within the European humanistic community.[163] The claim of the *Plantarum* to an international readership is strengthened by recent work by Helmer J. Helmers, identifying an 'Anglo-Scoto-Dutch' public sphere with an appetite for Royalist literature outside the narrowly Anglophone community.[164] The bilingual character of the miscellanies and commonplace books kept by English readers in the period reveals the extent of reading, excerpting and composing in Latin among the educated élite.[165]

Early Restoration discourse routinely figured the return of Charles II as the dawn of a new Augustan age, accompanied by a rebirth of classical culture.[166] Dryden's *Astraea Redux* used the imagery of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* to depict the return of the Golden Age; John Ogilby's triumphal arches for Charles' entry into London portrayed him both as Aeneas and as Augustus.[167] In the overtly Restoration books 3-6, Cowley's use of Latin lends additional

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[162] On English neo-Latin scientific writing, see Porter 2014b: 1067; Waquet 2001: 82. On Latin writing by English poets as an act of cultural emulation, see Haan 2015: 430.
[163] Houghton and Manuwald 2012: 1-3; Revard 1997; Haan 2015: 428-429.
[164] Helmers 2015: viii. See also Binns 1974: viii-ix.
[165] The Latin contents of these miscellanies have received very little scholarly attention. Shurink 2010 discusses three Early Modern English commonplace books, all of which contain quantities of Latin text. Colclough 1998 provides evidence of the wide reach of neo-Latin poetry in manuscript miscellanies. See also Moul (forthcoming).
[166] José 1984: 44-48; Erskine-Hill 1983: 212-223; Hammond 2006: 93; Sharpe 2013: 154-158.
[167] Sharpe 2013: 154.

sharpness and vigour to his classical allusion.[168] The text of the *Plantarum* itself becomes an embodiment of that rebirth and a witness to the validity of the claim, the classical past incorporated into the Stuart present through the *Plantarum*'s status as a contemporary classical poem.[169]

Finally, the use of the Latin language also represented an encoding, a cipher whose key was available only to an élite and predominantly male audience. To claim this as an exclusively Royalist stratagem would be to overlook the ideological heterogeneity of the large and still very under-studied body of seventeenth-century English Latin, such as Tom May's oppositional continuation of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (1640) or Payne Fisher's Cromwellian panegyric *Irenodia Gratulatoria* (1652).[170] However, the hermeneutic effort required to unlock the meaning of the text highlighted the concealed nature of that meaning and suggested the presence of the covert messages which have been identified as a feature of Royalist poetry in the vernacular (above, p. 14). The inherently cryptic nature of the text encourages readings which seek out coded allegories and hidden political resonances.

8 Early Reception of the *Plantarum*

I have already argued (above, pp. 25-6, 37) that Sprat presented the *Plantarum* as the product of scholarly retirement, inspired by Cowley's study of medicine and informed by his outstanding facility for classical versification. In the early years of the Restoration, before scientific prose had developed its own generic rules, there was nothing particularly remarkable in this combination of technical and poetic writing: the generic inclusivity of the period still embraced the scientific, which in its turn was still strongly informed by the combination of the poetic and technical found in classical authors including Virgil and Lucretius.[171] However, Nahum Tate, in the prefatory material to the 1689 translation, presented the work rather differently, stressing Cowley's achievement in successfully fashioning a poetical work from the dour subject of botany (above, p. 32). Tate's contrast between *materiam* and *opus* – subject-matter and artistry – reflects the growing separation between scientific and poetic discourse during the latter part of the seventeenth century.[172] The persistence of this generic divergence has contributed significantly to the enduring

[168] See Binns 1974: viii-ix.
[169] Tate recognised this aspect of the work when he compared the panegyric book 6 to Virgil's praise of Augustus: '[...] the impartial Reader may judge if Virgil him self has better designed for the Glory of Rome and August, than Cowley for his Country and the Monarch of his time.' *Works* (1689), sig. a4^{r}.
[170] May 1640. On May's politics, see Paleit 2013: 241. Fisher: Moul 2016 and 2017b; Norbrook 1999: 231-235.
[171] Barbour and Preston 2015: 461-462; Levine 1998: 73-74; Radcliffe 1988: 798; De Bruyn 2001: 348.
[172] See Sawday 1995: 231-235. Despite Preston's assertion that this separation did not crystallise until the eighteenth century, I believe it is possible to see in Tate's distaste for Cowley's subject matter a sense that this intrusion of the scientific into the literary required explanation and justification. This is not to claim, of course, that literary modes of expression were excluded from scientific discourse (Preson 2015: 7).

neglect of the *Plantarum*, which is often read as an uncomfortable coupling of the literary and the scientific to the detriment of both.[173]

Another important early reader of the *Plantarum* was Cowley's friend John Evelyn, who cites the work frequently and eulogistically in his unfinished *magnum opus Elysium Britannicum* and in the fourth edition of *Silva* (1706).[174] For Evelyn, the botanical and aesthetic properties of trees are closely intertwined both with each other and with their economic importance, and he recognises Cowley as both poet and botanist.[175] The relationship between Cowley and Evelyn, and particularly that between the *Plantarum* and *Sylva*, will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

There is some evidence which suggests that the *Plantarum*, or parts of it, may have circulated in manuscript prior to the 1668 *Poemata Latina*.[176] Denham's 1667 elegy praises Cowley's Latin poetry (glossed in the margin as 'His last work'), as comparable to that of Virgil's, a comparison more readily applicable to the hexameter books 5 and 6 than to the elegiacs of the 1662 *Plantarum Libri Duo*.[177] Richard Peers writes of Cowley following his poem on Somerset House, on the Thames, with 'a Garden worthy such a Pile' and comments on the Restoration and Cowley's retirement that 'Poetry unto the *Woods* return'd.'[178] These references suggest the Thames-side setting of books 3 and 4 and the trees of 5 and 6 rather than the first two books. But the most intriguing evidence is that of Hester Pulter's long poem 'The Garden', which, like *Plantarum* 3 and 4, depicts a contest of flowers, who speak *in propria persona*.[179] It is highly unlikely that Pulter's poem, which 'almost certainly' predates the publication of *Poemata Latina*, was known outside the poet's immediate family circle, and, if its resemblance to the *Plantarum* is not purely coincidental, the most plausible explanation is that it arises from manuscript circulation of Cowley's work.[180]

The possibility that books 3-6 of the *Plantarum* were circulating prior to publication has a number of implications. The playfully adversarial relationship between Cowley and Katherine Philips, identified by Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, becomes more tightly focused if the

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[173] Thus Bradner: 'This attempt to delight and instruct the reader at the same time cannot be said to be very successful.' (Bradner 1940: 120). Sutton critiques 'the foreboding that one has picked up a kind of versified botany-cum-pharmacology textbook' (Sutton 2006/7).
[174] J. Ingram 2000; Evelyn 1664. For citation of Cowley in *Elysium Britannicum*, see J. Ingram 1998: 49.
[175] In *Elysium Britannicum*, a list of modern botanists considered worthy of commemorative statuary in gardens ends with 'above all our Cowley then whom none has better deserved of our profession, for the everlasting dignity he has don it', J. Ingram 2000: 201.
[176] Peter Beal: 'Cowley's works evidently had some circulation in manuscript – in academic circles, among Royalist exiles in Paris in the 1640s and 50s, among Cowley's personal friends, and elsewhere' (Beal, Abraham Cowley: manuscript copies of Cowley's poems). Hirst and Zwicker 2012: 164-177 is convincing on the frequency of manuscript circulation and on the dangers inherent in an overly-narrow focus on print publication.
[177] Denham 1667.
[178] Peers 1667.
[179] Eardley 2014: 84-105.
[180] Eardley 2014: 84 n. 264 (dating of 'The Garden'); 1 (circulation of Pulter's poetry). See Hirst and Zwicker 2012: 172 for a Pulter poem which strongly suggests manuscript circulation of 'Upon Appleton House.'

poets were reading one another's work in advance of publication.[181] Moreover, some urgency is given to the question of the potential relationship with another great Restoration garden poem, *Paradise Lost* (1667). Given the similar educational backgrounds of Milton and Cowley, the fact that they both published in Latin, their poetic stature and their opposing political affiliations, the two texts already have much to say about each other, and better understanding of the *Plantarum* will no doubt enhance the understanding of the literary milieu of *Paradise Lost*. While engagement with Milton's poem is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is hoped that the detailed study of the text of the *Plantarum* will pave the way for further consideration of the possible relationship between the two.

9 Implications

Through this study of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* – the first of its kind in English – I hope above all to re-establish the work as a major literary text, both within Cowley's *oeuvre* (where it stands as his longest completed work) and within Restoration poetry as a whole. In its presentation of a Britain which is the natural heir of the classical cultural tradition and an imperial power to rival Rome, it plays a formative role in the literary-political discourse of the early Restoration; in the centrality to that vision of the garden and the forest, it provides a verse counterpoint to the campaigning prose of Evelyn's *Sylva*; in its depiction of retirement it modifies the conventional view of Cowley as country squire and further challenges the identification of retirement with retreat. Perhaps most importantly, in deploying conflicting intertextual voices and in the use of an allegorical discourse which is often ambiguous or opaque, Cowley exposes fissures with implications for Restoration panegyric as a whole.

[181] Scott-Baumann 2013: 81-110.

Chapter One: *Habeo quod carmine sanet & herbis*

The Ovidian poet and the process of change in *Plantarum* 1 and 2[1]

1 The *Plantarum Libri Duo* (1662)

> *haec omnia scripta sunt paulò ante foelicissimum Regis reditum*.
>
> All this was written a little before the most happy return of the king.
>
> *PLD*, sig. b7^{r}.[2]

Cowley's sensitivity to the importance of context in generating meaning is clear from this footnote to the preface of *PLD*, which declares the work to be the product of the Interregnum, despite its Restoration publication date of 1662. The footnote invites reflection on the transformations wrought by that return, echoing the poem's focus on change in the form of the healing powers of herbs. Despite the optimistic tone, however, the Restoration did not bring an immediate cure to Cowley's Interregnum troubles: mistrusted by the Royalist inner circle as he had been by Cromwell's regime, at the time of the publication of *PLD* he was still unsuccessfully trying to secure a court appointment. It was only in 1663 that he retired to rural obscurity at Barnelmes.[3]

This chapter argues that political transformation combines with the stalling of Cowley's own career at court, and his experience of exile and defeat, to generate a poetics in *PLD* which is focused on a constant flux and on the temporally contingent nature of meaning. After preliminary discussion of the contents and contexts of books 1-2, I shall demonstrate the importance of Ovid in shaping this poetics, looking at the Ovidian career of love and exile, and at the focus in the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* on change and the passage of time. In the second section, I shall show how Cowley's accounts of bodily disorder and healing in books 1-2 both invite and resist political readings, arguing for the importance of a sense of timeliness derived from the *Fasti* in giving these accounts their political resonances. In book 2, however, these ambiguous allegorical signposts are overlaid by an account of the regulation of the female body which stands in opposition to the sexual violence implicit in contemporary scientific writing. In presenting the female body as compliant and subordinate, *Plantarum* 2 offers a powerful corrective to a highly misogynistic contemporary political discourse in which this body was regularly depicted as toxic, polluting and emasculating.

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[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.395. Epigraph to *PLD*.
[2] The footnote refers directly to the hexameter poem which closes the *Praefatio*, in which the poet justifies his decision to resume the writing of verse; it is the only indicator as to date of composition.
[3] Nethercot 1931: 179-215. On Sprat's elision of this period, see Darcy 2013: 32-34.

1.1 *Plantarum* 1-2: outline of contents

For a detailed outline of books 1 and 2, see the Appendix. [4]

Books 1 and 2 of the *Plantarum*, in elegiac couplets, were published by Nathaniel Brooke as a single volume in 1662; its prefatory material is discussed above (pp. 38-41). Book 1, after a programmatic opening which includes an invocation to Apollo and a prayer for spring (*Plantarum* 1.1-56), consists of twenty-eight separate elegiac poems on the botanical and pharmacological properties of individual herbs. The book is unique in lacking any unifying structural narrative, instead having the character of a miscellany. Sixteen of the poems are spoken *in propria persona* by the plants themselves; the remainder are in the persona of the poet. Lettuce (*Lactuca*, 659-674, 675-690), Sundew (*Rorella*, 831-844, 845-872), Celandine (*Chelidonia*, 1177-1200, 1201-1236) and Rocket (*Eruca*, 1237-1272, 1273-1312) have two poems each; Cyclamen has five (873-876, 877-886, 887-894, 895-908, 909-928).

Book 2, like its predecessor, opens with an authorial prologue. Cowley dismisses his male audience: he is celebrating the Roman rite of the Bona Dea, from which men were rigorously excluded (1-6). He invokes the goddess of the moon and the Roman deities associated with the female body – Lucina, Jana, Mena, Eilythia – and asks them to assist in the birth of his poem (7-20). He then proceeds to set the scene: it is the April full moon (21, 51-52) in the Botanic Garden in Oxford (54); the plants are beginning to grow, and are assembling according to tribe so as to discuss how best to maximise their utility to humankind (21-38). The poet explains that, as a man, he was unable to be present, but that the laurel, *mea Laurus*, who attended the meeting of gynaecological plants, reported proceedings, the *viridis secreta negotia coetus* (43, 45). The plants come together, presided over, appropriately, by Artemisia, or Mugwort, Cowley's *planta Dianae* (59). Lines 61-132 consist of a catalogue of the attendees, beginning with the previous year's president, Aristolochia, or Birthwort (62) and culminating in Laurel herself (128).

Mugwort then speaks, addressing the gathering as *Matres Conscriptae* (133) – a humorous allusion to the conventional designation of the Roman senate as *patres conscripti*. She explains that wars will be waged for as long as children grow in the womb, but that the plants' responsibility is to influence the outcome of those wars by understanding both their own strengths and those of the enemy (153-156). In terms evocative of the opening of the *Georgics*, she suggests that they first discuss menstruation:

> Prima meretur agi quae nos tam saepe recursans
> Sanguinei exercet Menstrua cura mali:
> Foemineus quo *fonte* ruens, quo *sidere* fretus,
> Foecundum toties *Nilus* inundet agrum:
> Quid Fluvium premat immodicum, impellátve morantem,
> Et Bona quot secum, quantáque *Monstra* vehat.

[4] See also the outlines in Moul 2015a: 221-22; Monreal 2010: 278-284.

> The first item worthy of discussion is the monthly trouble of evil blood, which, so frequently recurring, demands our attention: from what source does it rush, in what star does it trust, when Nile of woman so often floods the fertile land; what holds back the river when in spate, or drives it on when it is slow, and how many benefits and what great prodigies does it carry with it.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.163-168.[5]

Pennyroyal opens the debate, and is followed by the Cretan Dittany (171-242, 255-304). Both argue that menstrual blood is toxic and that its expulsion is essential, with Dittany providing a graphic account of its potential effects: maddening dogs, deforming the foetus, turning leaves yellow, souring wine, clouding mirrors (263, 264-265, 277, 283-284, 301).[6] Dittany's lurid exposition is mocked by Plantain and Bramble, to universal acclaim (317-372). Rose then replies, arguing instead that menstrual blood is accumulated in the female body in order to nurture a growing foetus (and is later converted into breast milk); menstruation is the natural expulsion of this 'plethora' if conception fails to occur (373-474).[7] Finally, Laurel is summoned to give an authoritative view. In an analysis not paralleled elsewhere in early modern medical writing, Laurel argues that menstruation exists so that differences between the sexes are maintained (479-604).[8] Humans are the only species to menstruate, though all species reproduce (499-508). Differences in appearance between the sexes are less marked in other species (553-578); but men are attracted by female beauty, so that sex is not merely a physical act (579-588). Hence the purpose of menstruation is to flush away the blood which would cause women to become more masculine in appearance (589-604).

The meeting proceeds to discuss childbirth, with Aristolochia describing how she assists in this difficult process (613-726). The next speaker is the mastic-tree, who delivers a stinging attack on abortion and above all on the abortifacient savin (*Juniperus sabina*), whom she urges to return to her native Crete, taking Dittany with her (727-794). Savin replies that she is not guilty, but rather the person who uses her, and argues that many plants of great utility can also cause miscarriage: she will have plenty of company in Crete (795-914). The plants concur with this view (915-918), and Artemisia, herself an abortifacient, speaks again, emphasising the importance of her timely use:

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[5] Virgil's *Georgics* similarly open with a string of indirect questions: *Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram/vertere [...] quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo/sit pecori, apibus quanta experiential parcis* (*Georgics* 1.1-4). The formula was regularly adopted by neo-Latin didactic poets, notably Réné Rapin in his work on gardens (Rapin 1665: 1.1-5 and Claude Quillet, in Callipaedia, a poem on the begetting of beautiful children (Quillet 1656: 1.1-6). Both Quillet and Cowley deploy to humorous effect the incongruity of applying Virgil's syntax to menstruation and childbirth.

[6] This view derives ultimately from Hippocrates. Dittany's speech represents beliefs found in Pliny which were still widely held, though falling out of scientific favour, in the seventeenth century. See Crawford 1981: 50, 59-61.

[7] This represents the theory propounded by Galen (Crawford 1981: 51).

[8] Aristotle and Soranus (fl. 1st/2nd century AD) both associated amenorrhea with masculine-looking women (Aristotle, *de Generatione Animalium* 2.7, 747a; Soranus, *Gynaecology* 1.23), but do not suggest that the maintenance of physiological difference is the purpose of menstruation. I am grateful to Professor Helen King, Professor Laura Gowing and Dr. Sara Read for their help on this issue.

Intempestivâ cur nos accersimur horâ?
Illa dies nostra est cùm *bona Iuno* venit.
Impia & infaelix, Virtutis *tempora* tantae
In magnum impatiens anticipare nefas!

Why are we summoned at an unseasonable hour? The day when kindly Juno comes is our time. Impious and unlucky woman, impatiently to anticipate the time of such virtue with a great crime!

Plantarum 2.925-928.

The last plant to speak is Myrrh, the Myrrha of *Metamorphoses* 10*,* who describes in graphic terms the effects on the female body of hysteria, here identified with disorders of the uterus (987-1181). But her speech is interrupted by the arrival of the gardener, seeking herbs to alleviate his wife's labour pains. The plants shuffle back into their places, and the book ends:

Discedunt, nullóque sono nullóque tumultu
Areolas repetunt Germina quaeque suas.

They leave, and with no sound and no upheaval every plant makes her way back to her own patch.

Plantarum 2.1203-1204.

1.2 *PLD* in context

The publication of *PLD* represents Cowley's first major venture into print since the *Poems* of 1656.[1] While that work secured him literary celebrity, it seems that his political career was permanently blighted by the ill-judged words of the 'Preface' (above, pp. 13-14). Sprat removed the passage from the 1668 *Works*, and in the *Life* he vigorously defends the poet's Royalist loyalties. The available evidence certainly suggests that, from the mid-1650s, Cowley was trusted neither by Cromwell nor by the Royalist inner circle.[2] That this mistrust should be directly attributable to the 'Preface' is puzzling: as Alexander Lindsay points out, many Restoration courtiers were men of chequered loyalties, and too little is known of Cowley's movements during the late Interregnum to gauge the extent to which his political activities or factional allegiances contributed to his marginalisation.[3] Most scholars, however, have generally followed Sprat in regarding the 1656 'Preface' as dealing a terminal blow to Cowley's political aspirations.[4]

As Thomas Corns has observed, Cowley makes clear in the 'Preface' that to abandon the writing of partisan poetry is to abandon poetry itself.[5] Moreover, if Cowley relinquishes his

[1] His only verse publications between 1656 and 1662 were the *Ode, upon the blessed Restoration and returne of His Sacred Majesty, Charles the Second* (Cowley 1660a), and (in prose and verse) *The visions and prophecies concerning England, Scotland, and Ireland, of Ezekiel Grebner* (Cowley 1660b). For bibliographic details of these two works, see Perkin 1977: 38-41.
[2] Nethercot 1931: 155-156, 158-162, 188-191, 199-200.
[3] Lindsay 2004.
[4] P. Davis 2008: 88-89, 93; Darcy 2013: 31.
[5] Corns 1992: 258-259.

poetic vocation, he must also relinquish the social and political context in which that vocation operates. This is expressed in terms of retirement and even death:

> [...] my desire has been for some years past [...] to retire my self to some of our *American Plantations*, not to seek for *Gold*, or inrich my self with the traffique of those parts [...] But to forsake this world for ever, with all the *vanities* and *Vexations* of it, and to bury my self in some obscure retreat there [...] And I think *Doctor Donnes Sun Dyal in a grave* is not more useless and ridiculous then *Poetry* would be in that *retirement*. As this therefore is in a true sense a kind of Death to the Muses, and a real *literal quitting* of this *World*: So, methinks, I may make a just claim to the undoubted priviledge of *Deceased Poets*, which is to be read with more *favor*, then the *Living*; [...]
>
> *Poems*, 'Preface', sig. a3^{r}-a3^{v}.[6]

The forswearing of poetry is a trope whose literary pedigree stretches back to Horace, and does not demand to be taken literally.[7] However, the prefatory material to *PLD* explicitly refers back to the 1656 volume. Both begin with a dedicatory elegy to Trinity College, Cambridge, the exilic lament of the 1656 poem contrasting with the joyful return of the later work (above, pp. 38-9). Moreover, Cowley concludes the *Praefatio* to *PLD* by defending his decision to resume the poetic career ostentatiously abandoned in 1656. The tone of the hexameter poem is light-hearted, likening the quality and speed of production of his poetic compositions to the after-effects of an emetic; it nonetheless serves as a signal that the publication of a new volume of poetry represents a change of heart. It emphasises altered circumstances and new departures, and, given how deeply embedded in Cowley's vision of poetry is its social and political context, it raises the expectation that the changed political circumstances will be addressed with a renewed vigour.[8]

The self-consciousness with which Cowley announces this new publication demands that *PLD* be read as a major contribution to his poetic output. However, very little scholarly attention has been given to the significance of Cowley's decision to publish this particular work at that particular time. Sprat brushes over the question, presenting the *Plantarum* as a work arising purely from Cowley's academic study of medicine:

> [...] after many Anatomical Dissections he proceeded to the consideration of Simples; and having furnish'd himself with Books of that Nature, he retir'd into a fruitful part of *Kent*, where every Field and Wood might shew him the real Figures of those Plants, of which he read [...] But then [...] instead of employing his Skill for practice and profit, he presently digested it into that form which we behold [ie the *Plantarum*].
>
> Sprat, *Life*, sig. c2^{v}.

Nethercot, taking his lead from Sprat, calls *PLD* 'a poetical herbal '[...] little treatises, some serious, some humorous, some instructive, some entertaining [...] embellished with diverse

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[6] This reiterates Cowley's earlier resolution 'to make my self absolutely dead in a Poetical capacity,' *Poems* sig. a2^{r}.
[7] Horace, *Epistles* 1.1.
[8] Nethercot 1931: 220-222; Corns 1992: 252-259; Darcy 2013: 31-32.

bits of quaint herb lore or with erotic tales drawn from Ovid and Catullus.'[9] He does not probe Cowley's comparison of the return to poetry with the recurrence of an incurable disease.[10]

It is nonetheless important to ask what this return to print implied, particularly given the tumultuous nature of the period 1656-62, in terms both of political developments and of Cowley's own career. With the footnote to the concluding poem of the *Praefatio* (above, p. 19 and n. 47), Cowley asks the reader to consider the work as the product of the late Interregnum despite its Restoration publication. The poet's Royalist loyalties are made clear both in the footnote, where the Restoration is described as *foelicissimum*, and in the text, with Cowley's deployment of the common Royalist image of the cicada.[11] Neither political troubles nor his own difficulties, he explains, could deter him from poetry: Cowley is a cicada who can sing even in the cold and rain.[12] The cicada confronting winter recalls the grasshopper of Cowley's Cavalier contemporary Richard Lovelace, which itself echoes Cowley's version of *Anacreontea* 43.[13] Unlike the grasshopper of Cowley's Cavalier contemporary Lovelace, turned to 'green ice' by the cold of winter, the Cowley-cicada both survives and keeps on singing; and unlike Lovelace and his companions, who stoke up the fire and poise their overflowing glass, creating an interior summer as a protection against the exterior winter ('The Grasshopper', 19-26), for Cowley there is nothing to mitigate the harsh conditions.[14]

This reference to the last years of the Interregnum evokes the period which saw the death of Cromwell (September 1658) and the succession and abdication (in May 1659) of his son Richard. Cowley's activity during this time is unclear.[15] According to Sprat, Cowley abandoned his botanical study in Kent soon after Cromwell's death, returning to France to resume his former diplomatic work.[16] Nethercot, however, exposes the inconsistencies and obfuscations in Sprat's account, showing how difficult it is to construct any credible picture of the poet's movements at this time and arguing that Cowley's energies were directed towards repairing relations with Charles II's circle of advisors and securing a position for himself in any future Restoration court.[17] It is against this background of extreme political uncertainty

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[9] Nethercot 1931: 223. For Nethercot, the *PLD* remains a 'little volume' (224), despite its total length of over 2,500 lines.
[10] Nethercot 1931: 220. Cowley describes his illness in the hexameter poem which closes the *Praefatio*.
[11] The literature on grasshoppers and cicadas in Cavalier poetry is considerable: see e.g. Marcus 1989: 229-233; Loxley 1997: 217-223; S. Clarke 2010a: 290-320. Karen Edwards has written suggestively on the contemporary conflation of the cicada of classical literature with the voracious and destructive grasshopper/locust and its use as a badge of coded Royalist identity: what appears to be the devouring locust is actually the immortal cicada, beloved of the gods (Edwards 2007: 243-244).
[12] *Poemata Latina*, sig. b7^{r}. On the symbolism of the cicada, see Allen 1960; 80-86; Rosenmeyer 1969: 134-135.
[13] Lovelace, 'The Grasshopper. To my Noble Friend, Mr. Charles Cotton', from Lucasta (1649) (Wilkinson 1968); Cowley 'The Grasshopper', Miscellanies, p. 37 (*Poems*). Joshua Scodel suggests that Cowley's Anacreontic grasshopper may allude to Lovelace (Scodel 2002: 233).
[14] 'Poore verdant foole! And now green Ice!' (Lovelace, 'The Grasshopper',15).
[15] Nethercot 1931: 187-191.
[16] Sprat, *De Vita* sig. a2^{v}-a3^{r}.
[17] Nethercot 1931: 186-191.

and precarious personal circumstances that Cowley invites the reader to set the first two books of the *Plantarum*.

In directing the reader's focus towards the Interregnum, Cowley carefully elides the failure of the Restoration to provide a substantial improvement in his fortunes. Attempts to ingratiate himself with Charles II in the dying days of the Interregnum achieved only limited success; while Charles did reinstate his Cambridge fellowship, the longed-for Mastership of the Savoy was conferred on Gilbert Sheldon in 1660.[18] Having endured both the 'internal' exile of imprisonment and removal (to Oxford and then to Kent), and, crucially, suspicion and mistrust from leading Royalist statesmen, he eventually achieved financial security not from the King but from his former patroness Henrietta Maria, with the grant of the manor of Oldcourt in 1661/2.[19] Cowley's writings in English from this period, notably 'The Complaint', with its tone of resentful reproach, and the longing for obscurity and solitude of the *Essays*, have been read as expressions of a continuing sense of marginalisation.[20]

PLD was both published and (allegedly) composed during periods of uncertainty and upheaval for its author. This is reflected in the emphasis on change in Cowley's prefatory material, an emphasis which in turn signals the importance of the theme in the main text. Colouring this sense of change is Cowley's resolutely optimistic portrayal of the Restoration, a portrayal which elides his continuing struggle for remuneration. Charles II is obliquely complimented in the prefatory elegy, since it was at the monarch's personal request that the Trinity fellowship was restored.[21] The *Praefatio*, too, with its stress on the change of heart which causes Cowley to publish a new volume of poetry (above, p. 40), hints at the altered circumstances from which that change of heart derives. No longer minded, as he was in 1656, to retire to the American plantations (above, p. 49), Cowley in 1662 feels once more able to engage with society by publishing poetry. Beneath the scholarly versification of the author's botanical research lies a concerted attempt to relaunch Cowley's poetic career in the changed circumstances of the Restoration, via a work whose subject-matter and Latin elegiac form marks it out as significantly different from its predecessors, and whose optimistic tone contrasts strongly with that of his English writings.

This new direction is emphasised by Cowley's choice of a new publisher: not the Royalist Humphrey Moseley, under whose imprint the 1656 *Poems* had appeared, but Nathaniel Brooke (Brook/Brooks), who specialised in botanical and medical titles. His list appears to have been politically neutral: after publishing the Royalist *The Queens Closet Opened* in 1655, a mere four years later he brought out Samuel Carrington's eulogistic *The history of the life and death of His most Serene Highness, Oliver, late Lord Protector* (1659). In the context of Brooke's list, *PLD* appears as a primarily botanico-medical work: it does not

[18] Nethercot 1931: 196-199.
[19] Nethercot: 160, 169-171, 195-200, 208-209.
[20] P. Davis 2008: 93-94, 102-109.
[21] Nethercot 1931: 195-196.

advertise political content, nor overtly proclaim a particular ideological agenda.[22] But this innocent packaging belies the close meshing of poetry with the political which Cowley espoused in the 1656 'Preface' (above, pp. 48-9); it also calls to mind Sprat's comment that, on Cowley's return to England in 1655, he was advised 'to dissemble the main intention of his coming over, under the disguise of applying himself to some settled Profession.'[23] The importance of dissembling and concealment in the work of Royalist writers has long been recognised (above, p. 22). Indeed, Annabel Patterson takes as axiomatic that no statement of intention in a text of the period should be taken at face value: such statements 'are more likely to be entry codes to precisely that kind of reading they protest against.'[24] In siting the *PLD* within the scientific titles of Nathaniel Brooke's list, Cowley made a similarly disingenuous statement: framing and supporting the botanical and medical content of the work lie carefully-contrived signals that it is to be read as a Royalist text.

The structure of the two books of *PLD* reinforces the optimism of the prefatory material. Book 1 begins with a prayer for spring, book 2 with spring's arrival (above, p. 46) – a movement which echoes the regular use by Royalist writers of the imagery of winter and spring as metaphors for Interregnum and Restoration.[25] Moreover, as I shall discuss in greater detail in the final part of this chapter, the botanical and medical content of the work follows this movement, with a focus on purging and evacuation in book 1 giving place to the more optimistic process of childbirth in book 2.[26] Winter yields to spring; excretion gives way to generation; *mala publica* are replaced by the king's most happy return, *foelicissimum reditum*.

1.3 The didactic function of the *Plantarum Libri Duo*

In the Introduction, I argued that the *Plantarum,* while resisting inclusion in any formally-defined 'didactic genre', nonetheless reveals a broadly didactic purpose which encompasses both its scientific content and its broader socio-political reflections (Introduction, 5). Later in this chapter, I shall consider in greater detail the fusion between poetry and factual content in *PLD* and its relationship to the emergent discourse of scientific writing.[27] Here, I look at Cowley's generic presentation of the work in the *Praefatio*, where he shows himself aware of the potential tension between the different types of discourse, and attempts to reconcile the two. This tension was an old one, informed by Aristotle's insistence on the mimetic quality of poetry and by Lucretius' need to justify poetry as the honey smeared on the bitter cup of philosophy.[28] It can be seen too in the evident relish of neo-Latin didactic

[22] See further p. 25.
[23] *Life*, sig. c2^{r-v}.
[24] Patterson 1984: 65.
[25] See e.g. Miner 1971: 4-5; Corns 1992: 100-102; J. Martindale 1993: 80-81; Loxley 1997 201-202.
[26] Flatulence: Betony, 1.117-120; urination: Maidenhair Fern, 1.203-206, Winter-Cherries 1.827-830; defecation, Wormwood, 1.425-444, Cyclamen 1, 1.873-6. Evacuation and birth were routinely used as metaphors for political change: see e.g. Jenner 2002: 253-272; Hughes 2011: 131-133.
[27] On the development of a distinct language of science, see Sawday 1995: 231-8; Preston 2015: 1-33.
[28] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1447b13-20; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 1.935-950.

poets for the striking tonal effects that could be achieved by using classical diction and metre to address contemporary or quotidian subject-matter.[29]

In the mid-seventeenth century, questions as to the relationship between science and poetry are given increased urgency by the growing sense that a special type of language was needed for the communication of scientific investigation and its conclusions, a discourse in which analogy, allegory and myth could provide illustrative material, but in which the rhetorical and the poetic would remain firmly under control.[30] As Jonathan Sawday has shown, the development of the new language of science was underpinned by contemporary thinking about gender, both in terms of the discourse itself, which in its lack of adornment resembled the Puritan ideal of virtuous womanhood, and in the activities of the male scientist, whose pursuit of knowledge could be figured as an aggressive male penetration of a feminised Nature.[31]

With the image of the pills gilded by the pen, Cowley revealed his awareness of the importance of literary decoration to the presentation of factual material; with the contrasting metaphors of the pestle and mortar and the alembic, he highlights the different characters of scientific and poetic discourse (above, pp. 29-30). This contrast is reinforced by the gendering inherent in the violent pounding of the pestle (*contundatur*) versus the gentle and convoluted windings of the alembic (*Praefatio* 1*,* sig. b2^{v}). The gendering is further strengthened when Cowley explains that he has been compelled to dress his potentially unappealing subject-matter (*materia*, the feminine gender of the noun repeated in the relative pronoun which follows) in the alluring clothing of mythology (*Praefatio* 6, sig. b6^{r}; above, p. 33).

Like Ovid choosing between the *meretrix* Elegia and the *matrona* Tragedia in *Amores* 3.1, Cowley casts his alternative modes of discourse in gendered terms.[32] But his contrast is not one of demeanour but rather of luxury, between the bright colours of Truth's dress and the embroidered gown in which Cowley agrees to dress his *materia* in order to be more appealing to a particular audience. And whereas Ovid allows himself to be seduced by Elegia, Cowley aims to seduce his audience by tricking out his poetry in gorgeous clothing. As a claim to poetic authority, it is highly unstable. Fortunately this glamorous but potentially unreliable poetic text is validated by the footnotes, whose prose sources must be regarded as trustworthy witnesses:

> *Nam quia nobis aliquando mentiri concessum est, eâque libertate immodestè abutuntur aliqui, ità in totum fides omnis abrogatur […] Itaque Testes adhibere volui Idoneos, hoc est, liberâ solutâque oratione usos; ea enim cum Versu comparata solenne Jusjurandum est*

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[29] Haskell 2014: 237.
[30] The most recent discussion is Preston 2015: 1-23.
[31] Sawday 1995: 234-237.
[32] Ovid: Wyke 2002: 130-137.

> For, because we are allowed to tell lies on occasion, and because some of us wantonly abuse that freedom, so all reliability is completely cancelled [...] I have therefore wished to invoke some suitable witnesses, that is, those who use a free and relaxed mode of speech: for that discourse, compared with verse, amounts to a solemn oath
>
> *Praefatio* 2, sig. b3^{v}.

The potentially punning use of the Latin word *testes* – 'witnesses' but also 'testicles' – genders the prose notes as masculine and further emphasises the contrast with the feminised poetic text.[1]

Cowley's *Praefatio* attempts to demonstrate that poetic and scientific discourse can be made to coexist. As such, it recalls his instructions for the teaching of Latin in the *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy* (1661), where he asks that 'one Book [...] be compiled of all the scattered little parcels among the ancient Poets that might serve for the advancement of Natural Science, and which would make no small or unuseful or unpleasant Volume.'[2]

1.4 Allegory, codes and ambiguity

In the Introduction, I argued that the analogical habit of reading will have made an Early Modern audience alert to potential political resonance in the *Plantarum* (above, pp. 21-2). This invitation to allegorical reading is further sharpened by the work's presentation as a product of the Interregnum, a period when the hostile political climate led Royalist writers to seek and deploy secret and encrypted modes of expression. In her influential study of 1984, Annabel Patterson explored the conditions of reading and writing produced by the existence of censorship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, looking at the ways in which writers were able to circumvent scrutiny by conveying meaning via hidden means.[3] Lois Potter subsequently showed how Royalist writers of the 1640s and 1650s used a variety of modes, including genre, translation and the adoption of poetic personae, to convey political subtexts and to protect the writer from criticism.[4] Both Patterson and Potter have highlighted the involvement in espionage of a number of contemporary writers, including Cowley, positing a link between the habits of mind engendered by extensive work with codes and ciphers and the deployment of a cryptic and allusive literary discourse.[5] As Andrew Shifflett has shown, even retirement and withdrawal could be a political statement, with the image of the Stoic garden offering a particular locus for exploring the idea of retirement as a form of engagement.[6]

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[1] Lewis and Short 1969.
[2] Cowley 1661.
[3] Patterson 1984.
[4] Potter 1989. See esp. pp. xiii-xiv.
[5] Patterson adduces 'habits of mind induced by years of living with conspiracy, with necessarily encoded documents' (Patterson 1984: 165); Potter sees an analogy for the mechanical task of cryptography in the practice of translation by Cowley and fellow poet-spies (Potter 1989: 57).
[6] Shifflett 1999: 39-52.

Cowley's work for Henrietta Maria as cryptographer and secret agent strengthens the likelihood of multiple meanings in his work. Indeed, as early as *The Mistress* (1647), Cowley displays an interest in the ways, covert and overt, in which information can be communicated to and received by a reader, most obviously in 'Written in Juice of Lemmon.'[7] However, the search for coded political messages in Cowley's poetry is complicated by controversy over the extent of his accommodation with Cromwell's regime, as expressed in the 'Preface' to his *Poems* (1656).[8] Nethercot reads his capitulation as genuine, if regretful; more recent scholarship has tended towards Wilcher's argument that the 'Preface' need not represent more than 'an earnest of good behaviour.'[9] Before looking for a political subtext in *PLD*, then, we should pause to consider the fraught question of the ideological allegiance of the earlier *Poems*.

Coded political messages have been sought in the *Davideis* and in the *Pindarique Odes*, notably 'Destinie' and 'Brutus', whose language of regicide has immediate contemporary resonance.[10] However, as shown in the Introduction (p. 14), scholars remain divided as to the works' political cast. In keeping with the overall shift in scholarly opinion towards a more nuanced reading of the 1656 'Preface', the twentieth century has, generally, seen a swing away from a pro-Cromwell interpretation of the *Pindariques*, to claims for a politically neutral or primarily aesthetic function, and to readings which identify them as more or less strongly Royalist.[11] Most important for my reading of *PLD* are those who emphasise the poems' interpretative challenges, whether they argue that those challenges will be rewarded by a 'correct' Royalist reading (as Revard and Corns), or whether they argue that the impenetrability of the imagery is intrinsic to what Patterson regards as the preoccupation of the *Pindariques* with 'figures and their potential for misunderstanding.'[12]

Most recently, Christopher D'Addario has built on Patterson's work, arguing that the ambiguities of *Poems* reflect a concern, born out of Cowley's dislocation from the English political and cultural sphere, with the inadequacy of naming and the instability of language itself.[13] In arguing that the *Pindariques* resist the imposition of a single, fixed meaning, D'Addario likens them to Marvell's 'An Horatian Ode' in their attempt 'to record political

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[7] Morris 2011: 21-41. See also P. Davis 2008: 83-86.
[8] Nethercot 1931: 158-160.
[9] Wilcher 2001: 341. Patterson reads the 'Preface' as a statement of neutrality, writing of Cowley's determination 'to show what could safely be written and published in 1656' (Patterson 1984: 165). Raymond Anselment writes of a 'distinction between accommodation and compromise' (Anselment 1988: 156). See also Corns 1992: 256-259; P. Davis 2008: 87-89.
[10] For a survey of critical readings of 'Brutus', see Patterson 1984: 160-161. More recently, Stella Revard has argued that the *Pindariques* offer coded reassurance to Royalist sympathisers (Revard 1993: 391-418).
[11] Cromwellian: Nethercot 1931: 150-155; Nevo 1963: 119-127. aesthetic/neutral: Patterson 1984: 165; N. Smith 1994: 285-286 ('The energy of these poems lies resoundingly in the poetry itself'); D'Addario 2010. Royalist: Corns 1992: 263-265; Wilcher 2001: 343-345; Revard 1993: 393-395.
[12] Corns 1992: 156-159; Revard 1993 ('The agent who wrote and carried so many coded letters between King Charles and his Queen now presents in his poetry a coded message to the people of England, one which those in the know may very easily decipher and read.'); Patterson 1984:164.
[13] D'Addario 2010: 128-132.

ambivalence during this time of historic change.'[14] D'Addario's comparison in turn recalls Thomas Corns' remarks on the political content of that 'puzzling poem' 'Upon Appleton House': 'Parts invite interpretation as political allegory, but when the scheme is disentangled it often falls apart.'[15]

These approaches to the *Pindariques* share a sensitivity to Cowley's ambiguous deployment of linguistic and imagistic signs and to his oblique presentation of political themes. As such, they provide a useful set of methodologies for exploring *Plantarum* 1-2, Cowey's next major poetic work and one which presents itself as the product of the Interregnum years. In the second part of this chapter I shall nonetheless argue that the work's ambiguous political signals can be resolved into a Royalist reading when considered in the context of a sense of time and timeliness derived ultimately from Ovid's *Fasti*. First, however, I shall look at Cowley's Ovidianism more generally, showing that Cowley's presentation of the contemporary world and of his own role as poet is strongly inflected by his intertextual engagement with the poetry and persona of Ovid.

2 Ovid in the *Plantarum Libri Duo*

> Resembling the elegies of *Ovid* [...] in the sweetness and freedom of the Verse
>
> Sprat, *Life*, sig. c2^{v}.

When Thomas Sprat highlighted the Ovidianism of the first two books of the *Plantarum*, he echoed Cowley himself, who had prefaced the 1662 publication with an epigraph from the *Metamorphoses*.[16] But this signal is not a straightforward one. For Cowley, as for other seventeenth-century English poets, there was a range of Ovids to choose from, including the witty and amoral *praeceptor amoris* of the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*; the marginalised and disillusioned persona of the exile poetry; and the poet of the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, with their emphasis on the passing of time, of change and flux.[17] Engagement with Ovid was further nuanced by a sense of the Ovidian 'career', in which the early love poetry becomes refracted through the lens of the late exilic works.[18] Moreover, as the work of Syrithe Pugh has recently highlighted, Ovid held a particular political resonance for Royalist poets, who found in the exile poetry a means of articulating their experience of disappointment and defeat, and for whom the erotic verse could provide a frame within which to express opposition to the regulation of sexual behaviour of the 1650s.[19]

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[14] D'Addario 2010: 132.
[15] Corns 1992: 239.
[16] *Habeo quod carmine sanet et herbis*, *Metamorphoses* 10.397.
[17] The Ovidianism of the first two books of the *Plantarum* is discussed in Moul 2015a; Monreal 2010: 219-25. On the various types of Ovidianism available to seventeenth-century English poets, see especially Burrow 2002: 301-19; R. Lyne 2002: 288-300; Pugh: 2010: 15-83; Kilgour 2012: 49-163.
[18] Kilgour 2010: 181-182; James 2014: 255-258.
[19] Pugh 2010: 21-38; 57-83. On Henry Vaughan, see Parry 1990: 53; Burrow 2002: 309.

The Ovidianism of *PLD* takes a variety of forms. As a work whose Restoration publication contrasts with its alleged Interregnum date of composition (above, p. 19 and n. 47), *PLD* stands poised between two worlds, looking both forward and backwards from a liminal standpoint reminiscent of that of Janus, patron deity of the *Fasti*.[20] Informing the work's emphasis on the healing power of herbs is a broader sense of change, drawn from the *Metamorphoses*, which invites reflection on the political transformations of the mid-seventeenth century.[21] This emphasis on mutability and flux undermines the stability of the material world and the power of language itself to represent a fixed reality. In book 1, a recurrent theme of alienation and melancholy recalls Ovid's exile poetry, an intertextual engagement complicated by the fact that Cowley's own marginalisation did not end with the political spring of the Restoration (above, pp. 50-51).[22] At the same time, Cowley can be seen to engage with the persona of the Ovidian love poet, both in light-hearted erotic narrative and in his own reflections on his poetic career.

2.1 Looking for Ovid in *Plantarum* 1-2

Cowley's invocation of Ovid in books 1-2 is both structural and dynamic. Victoria Moul has identified the features which give the work its Ovidian flavour: the use of myth, particularly from the *Metamorphoses*; the epigraph; the footnote citations; and what she calls 'tacit Ovidianism', in which themes and tropes from Ovid are present in a form which, though not explicitly acknowledged, is recognisable to the educated reader.[23] To this can be added the use of speech *in propria persona*, which applies to over half of book 1 and virtually all of book 2. The voicing in direct speech of tales of sexual misadventure, such as those of Myrrh (*Myrrha*, 2.989-1181), Mint (*Mentha*, 1.1029-1128) and Water-Lily (*Nymphaea*, 1.517-606), recalls the unfortunate women of the *Heroides*; when the tone is predominantly factual or aetiological, the echo is rather of the multiple interlocutors of the *Fasti*. In its combination of factual content with witty observations and lively narrative, the work recalls both the *Fasti* and the *Ars Amatoria*.[24]

Specific allusions to stories handled in the *Metamorphoses* reinforce the link between Cowley's treatment of change in the human body and Ovidian transformation. The weeping and shamefaced Myrrh declines to narrate the story of her metamorphosis from girl to plant on the grounds that it has already been told by Ovid.[25] The reverse occurs in the section on Mint, where a passing mention in Ovid is fashioned into a full and detailed account of the nymph's rape by Hades and her transformation into a herb by a jealous Proserpine.[26] In

[20] Ovid, *Fasti* 1.63-288. On the 'bifocal' reading of the *Fasti* signalled by the poem's two-faced patron, see Hardie 1991: 62-64.
[21] See Monreal 2010: 221-222.
[22] See particularly Nethercot 1931: 197-215.
[23] Moul 2015a: 225-226.
[24] Moul 2015a: 226.
[25] *Metamorphoses* 10.298-502.
[26] Moul 2015a: 225-226.

Water-Lily the poet goes so far as to invent an Ovidian metamorphosis of his own, on the grounds that he is unable to reconcile existing aetiologies:

> *Nymphaea nata traditur à Nymphâ Zelotypiâ ergà Herculem mortuâ, quare Heraclion vocant; aliqui Rhopalon, a radice Clavae simili, &c.* Plin. l. 25.7. *Nescio quâ auctoritate ductus Calepinus hanc Nympham Deianiram fuisse asserit [...] quem secutus non sum, cùm quòd Ovidius, cùm mortem Herculis narrat, istius fabulae non meminit, tum quòd vix satis convenire cum Plinii verbis videatur: nam Deianira neque propriè Nympha appellari potest; neque Zelotypiâ, sed dolore mortua est. Utcunque se res habet, licere mihi existimavi fabulam pro voluntate meâ concinnare.*
>
> Water-lily is said to have come from a nymph who died of jealousy towards Hercules, and consequently they call it Heraclion; some call it Rhopalon, from the similarity of its root to a club, etc., Pliny 25.7. Induced by I know not what authority, Calepinus asserts that this nymph was Deianira ... and I have not followed him, both because Ovid, when he tells the story of the death of Hercules, does not mention that story, and because it would scarcely seem to agree sufficiently with the words of Pliny: for Deianira can neither be properly called a nymph, nor did she die of jealousy, but grief. Wherever the truth of the matter lies, I have considered it legitimate for me to modify the story to suit my own inclination.
>
> Footnote on 'Water-Lily', *Plantarum* 1.517.

Yet another kind of allusion to the *Metamorphoses* is provided by the figure of Laurel, the narrator of book 2, who, by referring to her status as beloved of Apollo, recalls the story of Daphne in *Metamorphoses* 1.[27]

The Ovidian lover is particularly present in book 1, in the tales of Water-Lily and Mint and in the first poem on Rocket (*Eruca*, 1.1237-1272), where the aphrodisiac qualities of the plant are linked to Ovid's erotic appetites:

> Me iubet ut vites, qui ponere quaeris amorem,
> Naso, Cupidinei vulneris Hippocrates.
> Sed, bene si memini, nihil ipse gulosius edit,
> Et voluit blando solus amore frui.
> Ah vafer! At cùm tu tibi, *Naso*, medeberis ipsi,
> Tunc Ego *Lactucis* castior esse volo.
>
> Naso, the Hippocrates of Cupid's wound, orders you to avoid me, you who seek to lay love aside. But, if I remember correctly, he himself ate nothing more greedily, and wanted to be the only one to enjoy delicious love. What a knave! But when you, Naso, treat your own self with medicine, then I too shall be willing to be more chaste than lettuces.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.1253-1258.[28]

The exilic Ovid is recognisable in, for example, the poet's often-melancholy frame of mind and in the bleak northern landscapes of 'Scurvy-grass' (*Cochlearia, Plantarum* 1.303-370).

The shift in allusive register across the two books is signalled at the end of Book 1, when, in a second poem on Rocket (*Plantarum* 1.1273-1312), Cowley writes of his determination to be free of love poetry, recalling Ovid's similar endeavours at *Amores* 1.1.

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[27] *Plantarum* 2.493-494; *Metamorphoses* 1.452-566.
[28] The 1662 edition of *Plantarum Libri Duo* reads *Eruca*, in accordance with the normal Latin name of the plant, *Eruca sativa*. The 1668 *Poemata Latina,* however, reads *Euruca*.

The second book opens with a mock-religious dismissal of the male reader, evoking and inverting Ovid's dismissal of respectable women in *Ars Amatoria* 1:

> Sacra Bonae celebranda Deae: Procul ite, profani;
> Ite cachinnantes, non pia turba, *Mares*.
> Foeminei secreta chori nescite libenter;
> Nescite, aut saltem dissimulate, *Viri*.
> Inspectare nefas generis *Postscenia* pulchri;
> Ingens quae pascat lumina *Scena* patet.
>
> It is time to celebrate the rites of the Bona Dea: keep your distance, unconsecrated ones, begone, cackling males, you impious crowd! Be happy to be ignorant of the secrets of the female cast, be ignorant, or at least pretend to be, men. It is a sin to look behind the scenes of the fair sex; immense is the stage which lies open to feast the eyes.
>
> Plantarum 2.1-6.
>
> Usus opus movet hoc: vati parete perito;
> Vera canam: coeptis, mater Amoris, ades!
> Este procul, vittae tenues, insigne pudoris,
> Quaeque tegis medios, instita longa, pedes.
>
> Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.29-32.

With the description of the coming of spring at the beginning (2.21-36), and the replacement of the persona of the poet by the narrator Laurel, the pattern of allusion moves towards the *Fasti* as the winter of Interregnum exile and defeat gives way to spring, in anticipation of the Maytide Restoration and the meeting of the plants under the April full moon (2.37-132). The precise dating (21-22, 51-22) and the careful description of a particular annual festival (35-38, 53-62) further orientate the passage towards the unfolding of the Roman calendar in the *Fasti*. Moreover, instead of book 1's series of discrete poems, in the manner of the *Amores,* the *Heroides* and the exile poetry, book 2, like the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, is a single narrative, the meeting of plants in the Oxford Botanic Garden. Personal poetry gives way to an elegiac verse informed by instructional verse and by mythological narrative epic. Underlying both books, with their women turned into plants, their human bodies oscillating between sickness and health, and their susceptibility to reading as allegories of political change, is the mutability and flux of the *Metamorphoses.*[29]

2.2 The Ovidian career: love and exile

> The *cold* of the Countrey had strucken through all his faculties, and benummed the very *feet* of his *Verses*.
>
> Cowley, 'Preface' to *Poems*), sig. a2^{v}.

Early Modern writers read the Ovidian career both positively, in terms of the progression from elegy to epic and tragedy envisaged by Ovid himself, and negatively, as a career derailed by external circumstances.[30] As such, it represented both a linear movement

[29] For the breadth and variety of neo-Latin elegy in general, see de Beer 2014: 387-397; Houghton 2013 and 2017.
[30] Kilgour 2010: 181-183; Cheney 2015: 178-179.

from love elegy to the elegy of exile, and a cyclical one, which both began and ended in elegiac desire, whether for the beloved or for home and family. Colin Burrow has argued that, from the late 1590s, the concept of the Ovidian career increasingly foregrounded the exile poetry, with Ovid identified as an oppositional figure, the victim of his insistence upon free speech or *parrhesia*, the erotic desire of the early love poetry metamorphosed into the attempted persuasion of the emperor and the longing for home.[31] In Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601), Ovid is above all the poet of exile; while Heather James has argued that this Ovid of opposition and artistic freedom led to Jonson's adoption of an exilic mode in *The Forrest* to articulate 'a language of complaint and counsel.'[32]

Jonson's treatment of Ovidian exile as representing a sense of spiritual or psychological alienation as well as physical banishment was adopted by Royalist writers of the Interregnum, forming a counterpoint to the discourse of Horatian retirement which I shall discuss in the next chapter.[33] While the defeat of the King's party did result in compulsory or self-imposed exile for many, including of course Cowley, Royalists who remained in England, as Philip Major has shown, experienced a sense of alienation from the dominant party which could be identified with exile or banishment.[34] Henry Vaughan's *Olor Iscanus* (1651), complete with translations from the *Tristia*, uses imagery of Ovidian exile to articulate his inward turn as an act of political opposition; Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648) is pervaded by a sense of exile, even though, as Syrithe Pugh points out, his incumbency of his Devon parish was not 'a banishment in any literal sense'.[35]

At the other end of the Ovidian career lay love poetry, and the challenge presented to poets seeking to emulate the cynical and often amoral persona of the *Amores* and to address the sexual violence found both in Ovidian love elegy and in the *Metamorphoses*.[36] Recent scholarship on English Ovidianism has shown how poets negotiated the persona of the witty and cynical poet of love by alternately assuming that persona, modifying it, allegorising Ovid's stories of rape and lust, or repudiating it altogether.[37] As Syrithe Pugh has shown, legislation of the 1640s regulating sexual behaviour gave added point to this particular aspect of the Ovidian *oeuvre*, a feature exploited by Robert Herrick to heighten the oppositional force of his *Hesperides* (1648).[38]

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[31] See especially R. Lyne 2002: 308-312; Burrow 2002: 301-319; Kilgour 2012: 28-39; James 2003: 343-373.
[32] Burrow 2002: 295-298; James 2014: 248-258.
[33] On literal and symbolic responses to Ovidian exile, see Kilgour 2012: 30-31; Burrow 2002: 308-309; R. Lyne 2002: 294-298. The classic studies of the trope of retirement in Royalist poetry are Miner 1971: 88-92; Røstvig 1962. See also Loxley 1997: 201-215.
[34] Major 2013: 109-138.
[35] On Vaughan: Parry 1990: 52-54. Herrick's exilic persona is discussed by Pugh, who notes the centrality of Jonson in Herrick's imagined poetic community (Pugh 2010: 57-83). See also McDowell 2011: 107-108.
[36] See e.g. Burrow 2002: 304-308; James 2003: 344-346; Paleit 2008: 354-358; Kilgour 2012: 97-105.
[37] See particularly (on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*) Kilgour 2012: 65-74; James 2014: 246-252; R. Lyne 2002: 292-294.
[38] Pugh 2010: 26-38.

Cowley himself had explored the possibilities of erotic lyric in *The Mistress*, published (without the author's agreement) in 1647 and subsequently in the authorised *Poems* of 1656.[39] In the Preface to the 1656 volume, he describes the work in terms of the progression of his poetic career:

> for [...] *Poets* are scarce thought *Free-men* of their *Company*, without paying some duties, and obliging themselves to be true to *Love*.
>
> 'Preface' to *Poems*, sig. a4^{v}.[40]

Cowley aligns the 1656 *Poems* with both the linear and the cyclical models of the Ovidian career. He opens the volume by depicting the composition of love poetry as a rite of passage; by closing the volume with an epic (albeit an unfinished one), in the form of the four books of the *Davideis*, he implicitly echoes Ovid's self-proclaimed progression from love elegy to narrative epic.[41] More immediately, however, the 1656 volume recalls the other Ovidian career model, that of the cycle which begins and ends in elegy, absence and loss. In an extended discussion, Cowley writes of the impossibility of writing good poetry in 'rough and troubled' times:

> [...] if *wit* be such a *Plant*, that it scarce receives heat enough to preserve it alive even in the *Summer* of our cold *Clymate*, how can it choose but wither in a long and a sharp *winter*? [...] There is nothing that requires so much serenity and chearfulness of *Spirit*; it must not be overwhelmed with the cares of *Life*, or overcast with the *Clouds* of *Melancholy* and *Sorrow* [...] it must like the *Halcyon*, have *fair weather* to breed in [...] One may see through the stile of *Ovid de Trist.* the humbled and dejected condition of *Spirit* with which he wrote it; [...] The *cold* of the Countrey had strucken through all his faculties, and benummed the very *feet* of his *Verses*. He is himself, methinks, like one of the *Stories* of his *own Metamorphosis*; and though there remain some weak *resemblances* of *Ovid* at *Rome*, It is but as he says of *Niobe* [...]
>
> 'Preface' to *Poems* (1656), sig. a2^{v}.

Cowley refuses to become a second Ovid, capable only of the frigid, limping verses of a 'humbled and dejected [...] *Spirit*.' Instead, he dramatically draws a line under his poetic career, declaring his resolve to 'make my self absolutely dead in a *Poetical* capacity'.[42] Any further literary endeavour would be futile, blighted by the bitter political climate and by the cloud of depression engulfing the poet.

Early Modern readers, however, tended to value Ovid's exile poetry more highly than Cowley's gloomy assessment – or indeed most modern critical appraisals of the exile poetry

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[39] *Poems*. On the relationship between this text and the unauthorised 1647 volume, see Sparrow 1927: 22-27.

[40] Thus R. Lyne on the power of the Ovidian persona: 'Many 'Ovidian' works [...]show the influence of an idea of the poet as much as of an idea of the poem,' R. Lyne 2002: 289. On *The Mistress* as a literary exercise, see Morris 2011: 29-32; on Cowley's vision of his literary career, see Helgerson 1983: 214-231.

[41] Cheney 1997: 10; Kilgour 2010: 180-181.

[42] Although Cowley's ode on the Restoration had been published in 1660 (Cowley 1660a), it is in the *Praefatio* to *PLD* that he addresses the issue of his change of heart.

– would suggest.[43] Cowley himself may well have been alert to the disingenuous nature of Ovid's own claims to poetic decline.[44] And when he does return to poetry with the publication of *PLD* in 1662, the image of the cicada in the *Praefatio* (above, p. 50) explicitly contextualises the work not only as representing a change of heart but also as one written in the face of adverse circumstances.

The first two books of the *Plantarum*, then, demand to be read in terms of the Ovidian career of love and exile, though, as we shall see, their relationship to their model is a complex one.

2.3 Cowley and Ovidian love poetry

> Nunc invisus Amor, mihi nunc insana Libido
> Dicitur
>
> Now I call love loathsome, now I call lust insane
>
> *Plantarum* 1.1291-1292.

For Heather James, the rejection of Ovidian love poetry was a central component in the construction of Ben Jonson's poetic persona.[45] In *Plantarum* 1-2, Cowley similarly engages with Ovid's erotic verse, whether the first-person love elegy of the *Amores* or the witty and urbane narrative of the *Metamorphoses*: even though the erotic was only one of a number of themes available to the neo-Latin elegist, Cowley repeatedly adopts an Ovidian stance only to dismiss it, overtly separating his persona from that of the *praeceptor* and *lusor amoris*.[46]

This can perhaps be best seen in Water-Lily (*Nymphaea*, 1.517-606). Stylistically, as has often been noted, the poem is an exquisite Ovidian pastiche, and it would be impossible to enumerate each separate allusion.[47] In Water-Lily's brief *Venit amor* (522), for example, we hear an echo of Ovid's *nec mora, venit amor* (*Amores* 1.6.13). At 536, the pun on *taedia*, 'tedium', and *taeda,* 'marriage-torch' ('he did not want to bear the boredom/marriage-torch of just one bed') is characteristically Ovidian. The conceit of Water-Lily turning into a plant which lives off the lake of her own tears has a distinct flavour of the poet of the *Metamorphoses*. Moreover, the poem even surpasses Ovid in its use of suggestive wordplay. Scylla in *Metamorphoses* 8 may long to be the javelin which Minos holds and presses (8.36-7), but this

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[43] Oliver Lyne's reference to 'bookloads of not wholly laudable laments' is representative of twentieth-century assessments of the exile poetry (R. O. A. M. Lyne 1986: 203). For the importance of the exile poetry in the Renaissance, see Kilgour 2012: 30-4.
[44] G. D. Williams 1994: 50-9.
[45] James 2014: 252-255. See also Helgerson 1983: 110-111. James' controversial contention that this rejection of love poetry leads to the adoption of an exilic persona analogous to that of the later Ovid is indicative of the complex strategies deployed by Jonson in attempting to reconcile his fierce defence of poetic freedom of speech with his role as a court poet. See e.g. Maus 1984: 6-11; Moul 2010: 3, 12.
[46] De Beer 2014; Moul 2013: 306-307.
[47] See eg Sutton 2007: Introduction, 3.

double entendre is positively understated compared with Water-Lily's desire to 'bear the man who himself bore the whole sky' (*Ferre Virum totum qui tulit ipse Polum*, 528).

However, Cowley is at pains to describe the antaphrodisiac properties of the plant (1.579-90): the metamorphosed Water-Lily is able to prevent others from suffering her fate.[48] She is also insistent that, in its freedom from sexual desire, her vegetable state is vastly preferable to her previous existence (572-8). Humans are to be pitied for their susceptibility to the *maxima pestis* (immense plague) of love (578). This contrast between Water-Lily's chastity and human libido is reflected in the community of plants as a whole, who, devoid of sexual impulses, are sedulous in their efforts to be of assistance to weak and vulnerable humans (1.1303; 2.29-36). The Ovidian echoes in Water-Lily's story serve to emphasise the gulf between a human world dominated by sexual appetites and the chaste and orderly community of plants.

The last plant to speak in book 2, Myrrh (*Myrrha*, *Plantarum* 2.989-1181), appears by virtue of her role in the *Metamorphoses* (10.298-502), rather than through her pharmacological properties, on which Cowley's footnotes are silent. Although she coyly declines to tell her story – that is Ovid's work (2.1008) – the mention of Ovid in this final speech of the poem reinforces the link to *Metamorphoses* 10 first suggested by the epigraph (above, p. 34). Like Water-Lily, transformed from Cupid's jealous victim to a prophylactic against the fires of love, the incestuous Myrrha now speaks as the plant Myrrh, providing advice as to how the hysteric may be restored to sanity and holding out to other women the prospect of avoiding the mental instability that caused her own illicit passion (2.1047-1150). In both passages, intemperate or transgressive Ovidian love-affairs are contrasted with Cowley's concern for restraint, moderation and chastity.

'Eyebright' (*Euphrasia*, 1.691-770) again engages with the persona of the elegiac lover, this time primarily through the poetry of Propertius, as Cowley signals the end of his career as a love poet. The poem opens with Cowley's prayer to the herb that she will heal his eyes (691-694). As he reclines sadly on the grass, the plant herself appears, with her stem of nine inches (*dodrantalis*, 699) – a punning reference to the metrical unit *dodrans* which serves as a signpost that this is to be a poem about poetry as well as plants. Immediately recognised by the poet, Eyebright addresses Cowley as *vates* (709) and promises to help him if she can (715-722). She then describes her medicinal properties at length before invoking Arnold of Villanova (1235-1311), author of a treatise on eyebright, and instructing Cowley to mix her leaves with wine (adding *bene miscens utile dulci*, 'well mixing the useful with the sweet', 759), which, when drunk, will cure him. After enjoining him to record all this in his *victuro carmine* ('immortal song', 768), she disappears, leaving Cowley to assure the

[48] Moul 2015a: 228 n.16.

reader that everything is true: *habes vera dicta relata fide* ('you have words spoken in true faith', 770).

The poem is clearly in the tradition of dream-apparitions beginning with the ghost of Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 (54-107); its location in the sub-category of apparitions issuing poetic instruction (*Theogony* 22-35*, Eclogue* 6, *Amores* 1.1, Propertius 3.3 and 4.7) is carefully signalled.[49] Both Cowley and Eyebright refer to him as *vates* ('prophet-poet', 691, 709); Cowley's good offices to the plant are poetic ones (693-4); Eyebright's parting words refer to his *victuro carmine*, his 'immortal poem' (768). Like Propertius in 3.3, Cowley is *recubans* at the start of the poem; like Virgil in *Eclogue* VI, Ovid in *Amores* 1.1, and Propertius himself, he is disturbed by an apparition; but this apparition is not a divinity (Calliope, Apollo or Cupid) but the herb Eyebright, whose speech on her medicinal properties is to be included in Cowley's poem (667-668). Moreover, with the quotation from the *Ars Poetica* (*utile dulci*, *Plantarum* 1.759; Horace, *Ars Poetica* 343), Eyebright alludes directly to an Horatian poetics which aims both to delight and instruct. Eyebright is steering Cowley towards verse which has the capacity to inform as well as entertain.

But she also steers him away from love poetry. Eyebright's sudden appearance carries the echo of Cynthia's ghost in Propertius 4.7, who stands before the sleepless poet and delivers a speech of comparable length though very different tone to that of Eyebright; the sudden epiphany and the focus on the clothed body recall Corinna in *Amores* 1.5:

> ecce, Corinna venit, tunica velata recincta,
> candida dividua colla tegente coma
>
> Ovid, *Amores* 1.5.9-10.

> Talibus orabam recubans in gramine moestus,
> Cùm subitò ad nostros astitit illa pedes.
> Mirabar *Funginum ortum* tam nobilis *Herbae*;
> Nam nec eam vidi, nec, puto, ibi antè fuit.
> Dodrantalis erat fusco velamine Caulis:
> Crenatae frondes subviridésque tegunt.

> Such was my prayer as I lay sorrowing on the grass, when suddenly she stood right by my feet. I marvelled at the mushroom-like growth of so noble a herb; nor I did not see her earlier, nor, I think, was she there. Her stem was of nine inches, with a dark covering: notched leaves of greenish colour covered her.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.695-700.[50]

There are also hints of Catullus, particularly poem 76, the prayer to be released from an *ingratus amor* (Catullus 76.6). At line 3, Cowley prays to be healed *si bene de vobis merui* (line 693); Catullus asks that his prayer be granted in return for his *pietas* (76.26). According

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[49] I omit from this list Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue, rediscovered only in the twentieth century. I follow Maria Wyke in reading Propertius 4.7 with reference to the direction of the poet's career (Wyke 2002: 99-108).

[50] The contrast between the eroticism of the highly removable clothing covering Corinna's body, and the purely descriptive details of the down and leaves which cover Eyebright, shows Cowley wittily subverting an Ovidian reference. See Moul 2015a: 227-228.

to Eyebright, Cowley's eyesight has been damaged by the hedonistic lifestyle of the elegiac lover: by wine, love-affairs ('blind love, who hates the light', 35), hangovers, sleepless nights of anxiety. Love is given special prominence, and when Cowley drinks the healing tincture of eyebright in wine, he is told to toast each of his girlfriends by name, a gesture strongly suggestive of the valedictory. Like Propertius 4.7, 'Eyebright' signals the end of a career as a love poet; there is moreover a certain degree of kinship between Cowley's declared intention of writing about the properties of plants and Propertius' announced programme of aetiological elegy.[51]

Rocket, E*ruca sativa*, is the subject of the last two poems of book 1. In the first of these (1237-1272), the plant speaks *in propria persona*, describing her powers as an aphrodisiac. Ovid, 'the Hippocrates of Cupid's wounds', she says, warned against her consumption by those who wished to be cured of love, even though, she adds, the poet failed to follow his own advice (1253-1258). In the second poem (1273-1410), Cowley sternly banishes her from his work: she is a *lena* (1273), the depraved procuress of Roman elegy; her presence is offensive to chaste plants and a chaste poet (1275). But, he admits, even as he wrote down the words of the preceding poem, he felt the unmistakable stirrings of erotic desire:

> Ipse ego (quis credat) de te dum carmina pango,
> Et tua dum Mentem stringit *Imago* meam,
> Nescio quem sensi perrepere in ossa calorem,
> Qualem praemittit mox subiturus Amor.
> Ille quidem tali pugnam cum *Velite Flammâ*
> Incipere (heu quondam res mihi nota!) solet.
> Nunc invisus *Amor*, mihi nunc *Insana Libido*
> Dicitur, et didici *Nomina* vera loqui.
> I, fuge, quaere alium, lasciva *Eruca*, Poetam;
> Lesbia det Vatem, sive Corinna suum.
> Carmine tu nostro vel praetereunda, vel inter
> Dira *Venena* tuum tandem habitura locum.
>
> I myself (who would believe it?), while I was writing the poem about you, and while your image confined my thoughts, I felt I know not what heat creep into my bones, the kind which is sent ahead by a love that is soon to steal upon one. Love is wont to begin the fight (O, a situation once well known to me!) with a skirmishing flame like this. Now I call love hateful, I call lust insane, and I have learned to speak their true names. Go, run away, naughty rocket, seek another poet, let Lesbia give you her bard, or Corinna hers. You are to be left out of my poem, or else you will have your place at last among the deadly poisons.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.1285-1296.

This close association between writing about love and feeling the sensations of erotic desire derives ultimately from *Amores* 1.1-2, where Ovid is in quick succession derailed by Cupid from an intended epic project and made to fall in love. In both cases, the effect is a textualising one: to be in love is to write about love, to assume the persona of an Ovidian or

[51] The extent to which Propertius actually succeeds in abandoning love-poetry, or indeed whether he has any real intention of doing so, is debated: see Keith 2013: 111-112.

Catullan love poet.[52] Whether Cowley successfully resists the onset of Amor is left unresolved: the poem ends by admitting the difficulty of avoiding the aphrodisiac Rocket; and we should remember that Cowley does not succeed in banishing the plant, whose poem remains within the collection.

In denying that he is a love poet, Cowley nonetheless continues to write erotic verse, an ambiguity which is central to his relationship with the Ovidian persona. Despite his claim to have left the genre behind him, and despite the moralised outcomes of the sexual exploits of Water-Lily and Myrrh, he nonetheless includes their salacious stories. Naughty Rocket (*lasciva eruca*, 1.1293) retains her place. The narrator of book 2 is the transformed Daphne, her status as emblem of poetry conferred as the result of a frustrated sexual assault. Her contribution to the menstruation debate emphasises the female body as the proper recipient of male desire.

Heather James argues that Jonson defined his poetic persona in opposition to that of the Ovidian *lusor amoris* (above, p. 62), and, moreover, that that persona was informed by an Ovidian sense of exile. In the *Plantarum*, too, the emphatic dismissal of erotic poetry in the final lines of book 1 suggests that it is only at that point that the persona of the love poet is finally shaken off. Before proceeding to the Ovid of the *Metamorphoses* who animates book 2 of the *Plantarum*, in other words, Cowley in book 1 deploys an Ovidianism which incorporates both love and alienation.

2.4 *Plantarum* 1-2 and Ovidian exile

> *Recubans in gramine moestus*
>
> As I lay sorrowing on the grass
>
> *Plantarum* 1.695.

In the 'Preface' to the 1656 *Poems*, Cowley declared that his current circumstances were as unfavourable to the production of poetry as those of Ovid's exile (above, p. 61). In the *Praefatio* to *PLD*, he explains that he has found himself unable to cease writing poetry altogether even in this hostile political climate: he is a cicada who continues to sing even in the depths of winter. The importance of the cicada or grasshopper as a Royalist image has already been noted (above, p. 50); here, the emphasis on the poet's continued output during difficult times provides an echo of an Ovidian poetics of exile which recognises the importance of composition to making exile tolerable, and which equates his own survival with that of his poetry. In *Ex Ponto* 4.10, Ovid refers to the process of composition as a means of solace and escape from harsh realities (65-70); in *Tristia* 3.7, he contrasts his present alienation and isolation with the endurance of his literary output:

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[52] See Sharrock 2002: 156-7; Buchan 1995: 54-66. As discussed above (p. 66), Cowley presented his own collection of love poems, *The Mistress*, in terms of his poetic career.

quilibet hanc saevo vitam mihi finiat ense,
me tamen extincto fama superstes erit,
dumque suis victrix omnem de montibus orbem
prospiciet domitum Martia Roma, legar.

Ovid, *Tristia* 3.7.49-52.[53]

The intertextual engagement in the *Plantarum* passage is a triangular one. With the reference to poetic composition in difficult circumstances, he recalls his own invocation of Ovid in *Poems*; with the mention of the cicada, he looks towards the use of the trope by Royalist writers: his own translation of Anacreon, where the sated grasshopper expires before the onset of winter, and Lovelace's grasshopper, who survives into the winter before being transformed into 'green ice'.[54] Moreover, the collocation of Ovidian exilic poetics with Royalist imagery in turn evokes the Royalist deployment of Ovidian tropes of exile in their own accounts of political marginalisation and displacement.[55] The context, in the hexameter poem which closes the *Praefatio*, is a light-hearted one (Cowley compares his poetic output to the effects of drinking an emetic); but there is a more serious suggestion here of Cowley the survivor, pursuing his poetic vocation with an Ovidian tenacity when others have long abandoned the struggle.

While winter is so common a metaphor for defeat in Royalist poetry as to be almost unremarkable, its prevalence in the Ovidian exilic corpus gives its use in the *Plantarum* a distinct flavour of the classical poet.[56] Very early in the work comes a prayer to Apollo, comparing his arrival to the coming of spring:

Numen ades iam nunc, Divûm doctissime *Phoebe*,
Et *Plantae*, & *Vates* nam tua turba sumus.
Quâque venis, fundas circùm *Lucémque Calorémque*,
Atque omnibus *Vitâ* sit via picta novâ.
Qualem te sentit *Brumalis* vincula *Mortis*
Rumpentem magico lumine vernus ager,
Ad Colchos Aries cum te vehit Aureus Aureum,
Et calida *Arctous* gaudia *Mundus* agit.

Even now be here, divine one, Phoebus, most learned of the gods, for both plants and we poets are your followers. And where you come, may you pour warmth and light all around, and may your path be painted with new life for all. Just as the springtime field feels you bursting the chains of wintry death with your magic light, when the golden Ram carries you, golden one, to Colchis, and the world of the Arctic performs the joyful rites of warmth.

Plantarum 1.19-26.

Poems on the coming of spring are common in both classical and Renaissance Latin poetry.[57] Cowley foregrounds the relationship with Ovid through topographical detail, with the

[53] See also *Tristia* 5.14, *Metamorphoses* 15.871-879. On the trope, see Claassen 2013: 83-84.
[54] Lovelace, 'The Grasshopper', 15; Cowley, 'The Grasshopper', *Miscellanies*, p. 37 (*Poems*).
[55] See especially Pugh 2010: 57-83. As Maggie Kilgour has shown, the political application of Ovidian exile tropes was not confined to Royalists (Kilgour 2012: 31-32). It is via the image of the grasshopper that it is here given its particular Royalist cast.
[56] For the 'cavalier winter', see Miner 1971: 282-297. On the inhospitable winters of Tomis, see e.g. G. D. Williams 2002: 236-237; Wilkinson 1955: 325-334.
[57] Classical examples include Horace, *Odes* 1.4, 4.7; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 1.250-261, 5.737-740; Virgil, *Georgics* 2.315-245; Ovid, *Tristia* 3.12. Neo-Latin poets who handled the theme include

reference to Colchis on the Black Sea evoking the place of Ovid's exile and the mention of the Arctic recalling Ovid's regular if inaccurate identification of Pontus with Scythia and the far north.[58] The Ovidian context is reinforced by the reference at 23 to *vincula (*'chains') and *brumalis mortis* ('wintry death'), imagery which, while by no means exclusive to Ovid, nonetheless is a recurrent feature of the exile poetry.[59]

As well as recalling the location of Ovid's exile, mentions of the far north can also reference Britain.[60] Cowley's prayer asks Apollo to bring light, warmth and new life to him as a poet and to the plants. This is compared to the coming of spring in the Ovidian exilic location of the Black Sea, which is in turn (via the reference to the Arctic) mapped onto Britain. Cowley thus deftly gives his classical prayer a contemporary, political application: the British winter of his Ovidian exile can be transformed with the new life of spring. Like the image of the cicada from the *Praefatio*, the identification of winter with political marginalisation recurs regularly in Royalist poetry. [61] Cowley uses topographical detail to reference both the Britain of Royalist poetry and the Ovidian Black Sea, subtly reinforcing the political character of his work.

Weathering out the winter is an important theme of 'Winter-Cherries' (*Vesicaria*, *Plantarum* 1.771-830). Winter-Cherries mocks the plants who have to be planted in the Elysian Fields lest the breeze ruffle their leaves (781-782); she herself summons the winter with comic bravado, proudly brandishing her berries in the face of the tyrant (795-806).[62] As with Cowley's prayer to Apollo, there is Ovidian allusion here, but a muted one: the key is the reference to the halcyon at 783, where Winter-Cherries scornfully compares the inability of plants to grow in harsh conditions with the bird which will only breed on a calm sea:

> Scilicet *Halcyones* sumus, & producere foetus
> Haud lubitum est, toto ni sit in orbe quies.
>
> To be sure, we are halcyons, and we don't at all care to bring forth young unless there is peace in the whole world.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.783-784.

The story of the halcyon is best known from Ovid's tale of Alcyone and Ceyx in *Metamorphoses* 8 (410-748).[63] It also picks up Cowley's simile in the *Preface* to *Poems*, where he explains that, like the halcyon, poets can only write in times of peace, citing Ovid's

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Sannazaro (*Delitiae CC Italorum Poetarum* (1609), 714; Putnam 2009), Secundus (*Ceremonial Elegy* 1; Murgatroyd 2000), Buchanan (*Maiae Calendae*, 1625) and Milton (*Elegia Quinta*, from *Poems* (1645)).

[58] On Ovid's topography, see G. D. Williams 1994: 8-13. Pontus and the far north: see eg *Tristia* 5.5.39-40; Pontus and Scythia:*Tristia* 1.3.61, 3.2.1-2.

[59] See e.g. Ovid, *Tristia* 3.10.25, *vincti concrescant frigore rivi*; *Ex Ponto* 2.2.94, *undaque vincta gelu*; *Ex Ponto* 1.7.9-10, where life in the Pontic winter is depicted as a living death.

[60] Romm 1992: 140-198.

[61] For other examples of the trope, see Miner 1971: 295-297.

[62] This motif of endurance is also found in 'Wormwood' (*Absinthium*, *Plantarum* 1.415-516), who describes herself as a Stoic in opposition to weaker, Epicurean plants.

[63] See Palomo 1981: 205-207, where the halcyon of mid-seventeenth century poetry is firmly linked to the Ovidian original.

exile poetry as a cautionary example (above, p. 61). The mention of the halcyon thus immediately evokes an Ovidian story. It is also keyed to Cowley's use of Ovid to illustrate his assertion that poets cannot write well in bad times. Poets are like halcyons: as halcyons can only breed on a calm sea, so can poets can only produce good poetry in good times. Ovid tried to write poetry in bad times, and wrote bad poetry; by implication, Cowley, deterred by neither public troubles nor his own, will do the same (above, p. 50).[64] Winter-Cherries' scornful dismissal of the inferior plants who cannot cope with bad weather serves as a reminder of Ovid's refusal to recognise his poetic limitations, and moreover implies that no good will come of Cowley's insistence on writing in a harsh climate.[65] As observed above (p. 61), Cowley's dismissal of Ovid's exile poetry did not reflect Early Modern critical consensus, and there is correspondingly no need to read his self-deprecating appraisal of his own work literally. What he is doing, however, is to key *PLD* to the work of Ovid, and in particular to the exilic works.

The superiority of the diminutive Winter-Cherries extends even over much larger trees:

> Nec tantùm haec *parvas* ignavia possidet *Herbas*,
> Nec *repit* semper dedecus illud humi:
> Patricias Ulmos Quercúsque effoeminat ipsas,
> Atque Anima in duro Cortice mollis inest.
> Nec pudet haec virides Sibaritica vita Gigantas;
> Aestate in coelos scandere velle putes.
> Eia! actum est, illis Tergum si verterit *Annus*.
> Eia! Sub terram *Vita Gigantis* abit.
>
> Nor does this cowardice possess only little herbs, nor does that ignominy always creep along the ground. It makes women of the aristocratic elms and the very oak-trees, and inside the hard bark there is a soft spirit. Nor are the green giants ashamed of this Sybaritic existence: in summer you would think they wanted to scale the heavens. Ha! It's all over, if the year turns its back on them. Ha! the life of the giant departs beneath the earth.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.785-792.

In the political context suggested by the reference to the halcyon and by Cowley's connection of the image with Ovid's exilic poetry in *Poems*, these lines gain a further contemporary resonance. With the epithet *patricias*, the elms are anthropomorphised as aristocrats; oaks are closely associated with royalty and with the Stuarts in particular.[66] Winter-Cherries sets herself up in contrast not only to Cowley's characterisation of poets, but also to the English nobility unable to survive the winter of Parliamentarian rule.

Moreover, she provides an alternative model, of an organism capable not only of surviving winter but of defying and even vanquishing harsh climatic conditions. Winter-

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[64] See further Palomo 1981, who argues (pp. 207-208) that, by the time of the Restoration, the halcyon had come to be regarded as a harbinger of stormy weather.
[65] The capacity for self-awareness demonstrated here is not generally recognised in modern scholarship on Cowley's later works: see P. Davis 2008: 93-94; Darcy 2013: 33-34.
[66] In James Howell's immensely popular *Dodona's Grove*, the elms represent the nobility and the oak the king (Howell 1640). See also Theis 2009: 215.

Cherries brandishes her purple berries in the face of the tyrant winter (*ante ora tyranni*, 801), boasting that no rain can dilute their colour and that the whiteness of the snow will show them to their best advantage:

> Funde tuos *Imbres*; saturatas murice *Baccas*
> Incocto nullis diluit Imber aquis.
> Funde *Nives*; Nivibus renitescit *Purpura* iunctis,
> Et rubrum in puro *Vase Toreuma* placet.
> Sic prodest Labris albi vicinia dentis,
> Sic decorat roseas candida forma genas.
>
> Pour forth your rain-storms: no rain-water washes out my berries, imbued with deep-dyed purple. Pour forth your snows: the purple shines forth next to the snow, and the red embossing pleases the eye in its pure white vase. Thus does the proximity of the white teeth set off the lips; thus does a white countenance enhance rosy cheeks.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.801-806.

The imagery here works in two different directions. With the reference to the tyrant, Cowley invites a political reading, in which context the purple berries, with their regal associations, might suggest the defiance of a usurper by the supporters of the legitimate monarchy. But the passage also has a metapoetic quality. Winter-Cherries is a plant who claims to transcend the halcyon-like qualities of her peers, qualities they share with poets; and by extension her winter fruit is analogous to the poetry of troubled times.[67] Moreover, the beauty of her purple berries requires the contrast of the white snow to display it to its full effect (803-6). As the poem progresses, the plant boasts of her power against the cold: she can break through ice (812), and, just as Hannibal blasted a path through the frozen Alpine waste with vinegar, she is able to shatter gallstones, enabling the free passage of urine (815-816; Livy 21.32-36).[68] Winter-Cherries provides an alternative model to the self-deprecatory one of *Poems*: one in which oppositional poetry appears at its best advantage against the background of the hostile political climate in which it was composed. In stark contrast to the defeatism of *Poems*, Winter-Cherries even makes an implicit claim for the power of poetry as an effective mode of political opposition.

However, the poem also admits of a rather different meta-poetic reading. Winter-Cherries' ability to restore urination echoes Cowley's own words in the *Praefatio* to *Plantarum* 1-2, comparing his current poetic output with the after-effects of a laxative. While once more the wit and dexterity with which he makes the point belies its sincerity, Cowley is passing a damning judgement on the quality of his Interregnum output. Like Ovid, he is attempting to write when 'the *cold* of the Countrey had stricken through al his faculties, and benummed the very *feet* of his *Verses'*; like Ovid, his output is diminished, at best clichéd, at worst lavatorial.

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[67] Fruit is a standard metaphor for literature, and nowhere more so than in a poem about plants. Richard Crashaw's 'Upon two green Apricockes Sent to Cowley by Sir Crashaw' is an apposite example (G. W. Williams 1972: 494).
[68] The image recalls Cowley's earlier claim to be 'the Muses' Hannibal': 'The Motto', *Miscellanies*, p. 1 (*Poems*).

'Winter-Cherries' sees Cowley develop the trope of the Ovidian – and Cavalier – exilic winter into an ultimately unresolved discussion of oppositional poetics. In 'Scurvy-Grass' (*Cochlearia*, *Plantarum* 1.303-370), he takes the desolate northern landscape of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* and shows how it can becomes a locus of triumph and rejoicing. The poem begins by identifying scurvy as a northern ailment, without a Greek name (305-6); it is described as a *monstrum atrox* (307), a marsh-dwelling hydra (311); the progress and symptoms of the disease are enumerated (313-340). Scurvy-Grass explains that she can effect a cure (341-348): this is the *dura provincia* entrusted to her (347). As a result, she now has a name in medical textbooks as a recompense for her neglect in antiquity (349-366). The poem closes by calling upon *ultima Thule* and the Gothic sea to celebrate Scurvy-Grass' triumph as the disease is led in chains before her chariot (367-370).

References to the Arctic (304, 366), barbarian language (305), marshes (311), and the *dura provincia* (347) locate the poem firmly in the landscape of the exile poems.[69] The poem also explicitly references Britain:

> Tunc ego littoribus crescebam inhonora *Britannis*.
> (Terra *Britanna* quidem tunc inhonora fuit)
> Crescebam infelix *Gothici* procul accola *Ponti*,
> Nec fuerat foliis vilior *Alga* meis.
>
> At that time I used to grow without honour on British shores (indeed, the land of Britain was then without honour), I used to grow, the ill-starred neighbour of far-off Gothic Pontus, nor had seaweed been of less account than my leaves.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.357-360.

The 'Gothic Sea' (357) is properly the Baltic, but the Goths were regularly misidentified with the Getae of Ovid's Tomis, in which context it becomes easy to misapply 'Pontus' to give an Ovidian resonance, so that 'the unfortunate neighbour of the Baltic Sea' can equally read 'the unfortunate neighbour of Getic Pontus' – that is, Ovid. So here Britain's lack of honour in antiquity is directly linked with the Ovid of exile and disgrace. Equally, the triumph which concludes the poem is celebrated by Thule, regularly associated with Britain, and the Gothic/Getic Sea.[70]

The desolate Arctic landscape of exile is transformed into one of triumph via the discovery of the healing power of the herb:

> Quis meruisse negat, cùm nostro Marte *Tyrannus*
> Vincitur Arctoo qui vagus orbe furit?
> Dicite *Io Paean*! ter *Io* sonet ultima *Thule*,
> Ter resonet *Gothici* littora vasta Maris!
> Ille ferox *Morbus*, manibus post terga revinctis,
> (Dicite *Io*!) *currus* ducitur ante meos.

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[69] The framework of the two books foregrounds the Ovidian intertext over comparable references in Virgil (e.g. *Eclogues* 10, *Georgics* 3.349-383). For the Getae/Goths misidentification, see Hornblower and Spawforth 1996: *ad loc*.
[70] Wijsman 1998: 318-323.

> Who can deny that it was deserved, when by my weapons the tyrant is conquered, who rages far and wide over the Arctic world? Cry Io Paean! Let furthest Thule thrice resound, let the vast shores of the Gothic sea thrice resound Io!. That savage disease is led before my chariot (cry Io!) with its hands bound behind its back.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.365-370.[71]

So Britain can be both a place of obscurity and a place of triumph. Equally, Cowley suggests, the misery of Ovidian exile is not so much the result of its geography as of its cultural isolation. Unknown to classical antiquity, scurvy-grass is 'meaner than seaweed'; now, she can make good her long neglect, known throughout the world (361-364). While Ovid certainly bewails the cultural barbarism of the Getae, his hopes for change are focused solely on the prospect of return to Rome: Cowley's suggestion that the nature of the place itself may change gives a very different emphasis.[72]

On a Royalist reading of the poem, the triumph is that of the anticipated Restoration, a vanquishing of tyranny through healing which will reverberate across the northern world. And yet there is nothing in the text of the poem itself to privilege such a reading over a Cromwellian or indeed a literal one. As with the *Pindariques* (above, pp. 14, 55-6), Cowley holds out the possibility of a particular political reading, while withholding the key. Only in the context of the Royalist framework of *PLD* (above, p. 51) does the poem's ideological agenda resolve itself.

2.5 *Plantarum* 1-2, change and time

> *Cuncta fluunt*
>
> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.178.

The theme of change becomes stronger as book 1 gives place to book 2. Cowley, like other Early Modern poets, looks to Ovid to articulate this theme. Contemporary readings of the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* focused on their treatment of ever-changing states and the inevitable cyclical and linear movements of time.[73] For Royalist poets of the 1640s and 1650s, intertextual engagement with Ovidian metamorphosis gained a political colouring, as a means of articulating both the 'world turned upside down' of the Civil Wars and their hopes for the transformation of the Restoration. Most recently, Syrithe Pugh has shown the operation of the trope in Herrick's *Hesperides*.[74] Change forms a key structural principle in *PLD*, in terms of the transformations wrought by the healing powers of herbs, the transformations in the female body discussed in book 2, and the political transformation of the Restoration, whose formal date of 1 May 1660 is anticipated by the setting of book 2 at the April full moon.

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[71] For *Ultima Thule*, see also Virgil, *Georgics* 1.30.
[72] Ovid on the barbarism of his neighbours: see Wilkinson 1955: 331-332; G. D. Williams 2002: 238-239.
[73] Burrow 2002: 302-308; Kilgour 2014: 217-218; Pugh 2010: 35-56.
[74] Pugh 2010: 44-45.

Cowley's work is thus endowed with a Janus-like quality, looking backwards to the Interregnum as well as forwards to the Restoration. This quality is heightened by the slippery nature of Cowley's contemporary reference, much of which can be read with either an Interregnum or a Restoration inflection. It is further reinforced by the emphasis on the rapidity of change – from winter to spring, female to male, health to sickness – and back again. In book 2 in particular, these constantly shifting states serve ultimately not only to underline their own transience but also to convey a world in which nothing is stable.

Both books begin with seasonal change: book 1 with the simile of the coming of spring in the prayer to Apollo; book 2 with the description of new growth in April. Moreover, the invocation to goddesses of childbirth at the very beginning of book 2 is a litany of doorways, openings, and transformations:

> Tu lucentem aperis, *Lucina*, Infantibus horam;
> Vitalésque uteri, *Jana*, tuere fores.
> Morbiferi rivos educis, *Mena*, cruoris,
> Mutatósve novo currere *Lacte* iubes.
> Tu *Sexum* regis instabilem, fideique marinae;
> Arbitrióque fluunt *Pontus* & *Ille* tuo.
>
> You, Lucina, open up the time of light to infants, and you, Jana, guard the life-giving doors of the womb. You, Mena, draw out the streams of disease-bearing blood, and, when they are changed, you command them to flow with new milk. You govern this sex which is ever-shifting and as trustworthy as the sea, and both it and the ocean flow by your authority.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.11-16.

Coupled with the focus on a specific seasonal moment is a list of deities closely related to Janus, patron of the *Fasti*.[75] References to stories from the *Metamorphoses* abound: Mint, Myrrha and Laurel all derive from Ovid (above, p. 57). Laurel's concluding speech in the menstruation debate (*Plantarum* 2.479-612) is underpinned by footnotes to the *Metamorphoses*.[76] Both books teem with descriptions of the changes in the body wrought by disease, and the power of herbs to reverse those changes. In the passage below, Myrrha's description of the hysteric's recovery has the immediacy and gradual accumulation of detail of an Ovidian metamorphosis:

> Tum membra obscuro cernes undantia motu
> Experrecti Animi lucida signa dare.
> Tum cava non solito fremere Intestina tumultu,
> Disiectíque Hostis tota sonare fugâ;
> Subter & obscoeno stillare Venena canali,
> *Sanguineásque* iterum lenè micare *vias*.
> Et se saepe levant oculi, coelúmque requirunt,
> Purpureúsque redux floret in ore calor.
> Ultima constrictas reserant suspiria fauces;
> Ad *Vitae* expirat *Morbus* & ipse modum.
>
> Then you will see her limbs, rippling with a hidden movement, give clear signs that her spirit is awakened. Then you will see her hollow innards growl with an unaccustomed uproar, and they all resound at the flight of the scattered enemy. From beneath, the poison drips from

[75] For the importance of Janus in the *Fasti*, see Hardie 1991: 47-48.
[76] See further Moul 2015a: 230-233.

> the filthy channel, and the paths of blood again flicker gently, and the eyes often raise themselves, and seek the sky, and the purple warmth, returning, blooms on the face. The last gasps open the blocked throat; the disease itself also expires in the way that life does.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.1103-1112.

The body changes, with the advance and defeat of disease; 'Scurvy-grass' shows that reputations change, with triumph replacing obscurity. Most startlingly of all, sex can change, when women effectively become men upon the cessation of menstruation (*Plantarum* 2.589-604).[77] Moreover, many of these changes admit of further changes, whether in the case of the body's change from health to sickness and back to health, the seasonal progression from winter to spring and, inevitably, back to winter, or the plants in book 2, animated by the magical power of the April moon (2.51-53), then frozen in their places at the advent of the gardener (2.1203-1204). Significantly, the last plant to be named in book 2 is the cyclamen, sought for its power in assisting childbirth, and singled out in book 1 for its Janus-like qualities in being able both to stop nosebleeds and open the bowels:

> Sanguine stillantem *Naris* quae occludere *Venam*,
> Posticae partis venam *aperire* soles,
> Nec ratione eges; nam iure *Patulcius* huius,
> Alterius debet *Clusius* esse loci.

> You who are accustomed to close the vein of the nose when it is dripping blood, also open the vein of the part behind. Not without reason: for the latter belongs to Patulcius by right, and the other place belongs to Clusius.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.873-876.[78]

At the end of the work we find a beginning, the birth of a child, attended by the plant of opening and closure. The Janus of the *Fasti* combines with a *Metamorphoses*-like moment of change.

Scholars have long noted the tension between the fixed state which is the outcome of the typical Ovidian metamorphosis, and the perpetual state of change described in Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15.[79] Allusion in *Plantarum* 1-2 to Pythagoras and to the Ovidian passage directs the reader to this reading of change, providing a reminder of the prevalence of instability and flux. In the final line of *Plantarum* 1, the appearance of Pythagoras accidentally consuming the aphrodisiac rocket (1.1312) provides a signpost to the importance of the theme of change in book 2. It also serves to undercut Cowley's rejection of love poetry in this final poem (above, pp. 65-6). Just as the chaste Pythagoras was unable to exclude rocket from his diet, so will Cowley find it impossible to banish erotic themes altogether.

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[77] Moul 2015a: 231-232.
[78] Cowley's note explains that the juice of cyclamen opens the *venas haemorrhoidas* (note on 1.874). Thus Gerard: 'The juice of Sow-bread doth open the Hemorrhoids, and causeth them to flow being applied with wooll or flocks' (Gerard and Johnson 1633: sig. Bbb^{r}). My reading thus diverges from that of Moul (2015a: 225). Clusius and Patulcius are cult-titles of Janus found at *Fasti* 1.129-130.
[79] Kilgour 2012: 166; Barkan 1986: 78-93.

After closing book 1 with Pythagoras, Cowley opens books 2 with a litany of deities which emphasises change and mutability (*mutatos*, 2.14; *instabilem* 2.15) and hence leads back to Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15. The echo is compounded when the plants begin to grow with the onset of spring:

> nam tener et lactens puerique simillimus aevo
> vere novo est; tunc herba recens et roboris expers
> turget et insolida est et spe delectat agrestes.
> omnia tunc florent, florumque coloribus almus
> ludit ager, neque adhuc virtus in frondibus ulla est.
>
> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.201-205.

> Convaluere aegrae, linquúntque cubilia *Plantae*,
> Atque exire audent *Sole* iubente forás.
> Ut gaudent *Caelum Patrémque* revisere charum!
> Rupisse & *Tumuli* vincla severa sui! [...]
> [...] Pro se quaeque opibus contendere strenua summis,
> Inque dies densis altiùs ire comis,
> Et folia & pulchros in lucem educere foetus,
> Et properè humanis usibus esse pares.

> The weak plants grow strong, and leave their beds, and dare, at the sun's command, to go outside. How they rejoice to see once more the sky and their beloved father! And that they have broken the harsh chains of their own tomb! [...] Each one according to her ability enthusiastically strives with all the resources at her disposal, to grow taller every day with her thick hair, and to bring forth to the light leaves and beautiful flowers, and to be ready promptly for human deployment.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.23-26, 31-34.

Aside from the overall Ovidian cast to *Plantarum* 1-2, and the proximity to Pythagoras, Cowley's passage recalls the description of spring in the *Metamorphoses* in the particular personification of the plants. In both passages, the plants gain strength and maturity as they grow, crucially, towards utility (*virtus* for Ovid, *humanis usibus* for Cowley). Pythagoras reappears at the end of book 2, in the closing section of Myrrha's speech (1149-1181). Myrrha announces, reluctantly, that she will speak of something new: God has allowed her to seek out the deeply-hidden secrets of the origins of matter and the minute particles from which everything is composed. (1159-56).[80] She explicitly, and vehemently, rejects the four-element theory in favour of atomism, and, in a clear allusion to Pythagoras, describes its exponent as *gnaviter insanus* ('completely insane', 1159-60).[81] Pythagoras is further evoked with the reference to the music of the spheres (*mundi musicus ille tenor*, 1158) and with the nod to the Pythagorean diet in the mention of the minute beans (*favis*, 1169) in which the elements lie hidden.[82] Despite her contempt for Pythagorean theories of matter, however, Myrrha's emphasis on the infinite variety of the world is closely related to the emphasis on change in Pythagoras' speech:

> Thesauros Elementorum congessit in illis

[80] The tone of Myrrha's words is reminiscent of the opening of Pythagoras' speech, with its emphasis on divine command and the revelation of secrets (*Metamorphoses* 15.143-147).
[81] Hardie 1995: 205 and n. 7.
[82] Music of the spheres: Hornblower and Spawforth 1995: *ad loc*. Beans: Burkert 1972: 182-184.

Verorum, in promptu Numen habere volens;
Principia unde suos depromere posset ad usus,
Et Mista aeternùm suppeditare nova.

Divine power piled up in them the treasures of true elements, wanting to have them ready to hand; from where it would be able to fetch the atoms for its own use, and supply new mixtures for eternity.

Plantarum 2.1165-1168.

The work thus ends on a strongly Ovidian note, and moreover one closely keyed to the *Metamorphoses*, with Myrrha, a character from *Metamorphoses* 10, alluding to the Pythagoras of book 15. The theme of change is strongly reiterated.[83]

Syrithe Pugh has identified a preoccupation with Pythagorean flux in Herrick's *Hesperides*, where the themes of exile, time and metamorphosis are intertwined so as to offer the hope of political change to defeated Royalists.[84] But the respective contexts of *Hesperides* and *PLD* are radically different. *Hesperides* was published in 1648, by which time the imprisonment of the King offered little realistic hope of a negotiated settlement.[85] When the first two books of the *Plantarum* were published, in 1662, the world had once more been turned upside down, with the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. The two works thus stand at opposite points of the cycle of change.

What for Herrick is a distant dream is presented in the *Plantarum* as a genuine prospect, expressed with remarkable confidence for an allegedly Interregnum poem.[86] Cowley, however, had increasing reason to believe that the Restoration would not mark the end of his difficulties (above, pp. 50-51), and the apparent optimism of his poem is undercut by the polyvalence of his political allegory and its susceptibility to multiple and conflicting readings. This impression is further strengthened by comparison with the *Poems* of 1656, and in particular with the notoriously slippery *Pindariques* and their widely divergent political readings by modern scholars.[87] In the *Pindariques* can be read an awareness of the potential of language to mean many things simultaneously.[88] Similarly, in *PLD* Cowley repeatedly invokes a political context only to have it resist identification with either Royalist or Parliamentarian ideology, or indeed with any ideology at all. ‘Winter-Cherries’ reveals Cowley’s sensitivity to the instability of meaning as part of the exploration of change. Britain's triumph in 'Scurvy-Grass' can be applied equally to Stuart or Cromwellian Britain. The rejection of the erotic in the second 'Rocket' poem, as well as representing the end of

[83] In focusing on the relationship of this passage to *Metamorphoses* 15, I omit discussion of the Lucretian features of Cowley’s atomism. See Moul, *EEBO Introductions*.
[84] Pugh 2010: 43-45. Pugh's account of Herrick's emphasis on flux contrasts with Maggie Kilgour's reading of Milton's much more varied treatment of change in *Paradise Lost*. Like Pugh, however, Kilgour relates the theme of change to political upheaval. Kilgour 2012: 165-170.
[85] Wilcher 2001: 261-270.
[86] Paul Hammond catalogues the increasing confidence with which Royalist sentiments could be published in the first months of 1660 (Hammond 2006: 3-4). See also Wilcher 2001: 347-348.
[87] For a survey of critical readings of Brutus, see Patterson 1984: 160-161. More recently, Stella Revard has argued for a straightforwardly Royalist reading of the *Pindarique Odes* (Revard 1993: 391-418).
[88] Patterson 1984: 164-165; N. Smith 1994: 285-286; D’Addario 2010: 132.

Cowley's career as a love poet, might also be read in the context of the regulation of sexual behaviour of the 1640s and 1650s. As I shall discuss in the next section, the female body under discussion in book 2 lends itself to allegorical reading in terms of the 'body politic', but is the child who is conceived and carried in that book to be understood as representing the new regime of the Protectorate, or of the Restoration? These questions are thrown into even greater relief by the work's own liminal and Janus-like stance, looking both backwards to the Interregnum and forwards to the Restoration.

With Janus we return to the *Fasti*, and it is in this text that lies the key to the construction of meaning in *Plantarum* 1-2. In *The Mistress*, Cowley had highlighted the changes in a love-affair wrought by time: to give one striking example, 'Inconstancy' looks back over the five years of a relationship, responding to the charge of inconstancy in terms of the constant physiological process of change and renewal:

> Five years ago (says Story) I lov'd you,
> For which you call me most Inconstant now;
> Pardon me, Madam, you mistake the Man;
> For I am not the same that I was than;
> No Flesh is now the same 'twas then in Me,
> And that my Mind is chang'd your self may see.
>
> 'Inconstancy', 1-6, *The Mistress*, p. 10 (*Poems*).

Time and its ravages are a common trope in Cavalier poetry.[89] Here, however, instead of the conventional emphasis on a linear movement of time towards old age and death, Cowley's use of the conceit focuses rather on change and flux, an eternal merry-go-round of time, in which opportunity must be seized in the brief moment before all changes once more.

Consciousness of the importance of the right and wrong time pervades *PLD*, an emphasis which recalls the Roman calendar of the *Fasti*, with its detailed prescription of seasonal observances. Cowley's cicada, chirping away at a time when Lovelace's grasshopper has become 'green ice', is singing at the wrong time, like Ovid, producing inferior work in exile. The obscurity of Scurvy-Grass will be turned to glory when the right moment arrives. Winter-Cherries is able to defy the cycle of the season, and may even be able to use her ice-breaking powers to turn bad times to good. This emphasis on timeliness is seen at its strongest in the debate over abortifacients in book 2 (2.787-988).

The debate opens with Mastick-Tree attacking Savin for her abortifacient qualities (2.727-788). Savin argues that no innocent girl would seek her out (887-888), but also points out that she can ease the pain of labour (867-878). She only causes harm if she is used at the wrong time:

> At tu legitimae cui desunt tempora *Lunae*,
> (Noctem Uteri Princeps humida Luna regit.)
> Tu folium nè carpe meum, nè carpe, monebo;
> Sed longè, quanquam pondere tarda, fuge.

---

[89] Miner 1971: 100-155; Pugh 2010: 39-56.

> But you, who lack the proper season of the moon (the moist moon is the ruler who governs the night of the womb), you, don't pick my leaves, don't pick, I shall warn you; but run far away, even though your weight makes you slow.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.879-882.

With the insistent *ne carpe [...] ne carpe,* Cowley modifies the conventional Horatian *carpe diem* of *Odes* 1.11: Savin's leaf is not for everyone, but is only to be plucked by those women who have completed the full term of pregnancy. Moreover, whereas the Cavalier use of *carpe diem* typically sets the opportunities offered by the present moment against an inexorable linear progress towards old age and death, Savin asks that her leaf be used in the context of pregnancy and childbirth, whose potential recurrence makes it more closely akin to the cyclical movement of the seasons.[90] Savin's argument is picked up by Mugwort, the President, who argues that timing is of the essence (925-928; above, p. 48). Savin and Mugwort claim that they are morally neutral, capable of being used for good or ill depending on the timing of and motivation for their deployment.

Used at the right time – *cum bona luno venit* – Mugwort, Savin, Myrrha, Crocus and a host of other plants (891-910) have beneficial effects; used *intempestiva hora*, they are lethal. This emphasis on timing echoes Dryden's account of the Restoration in *Astraea Redux*:

> Twas not the hasty product of a day,
> He like a patient Angler e're he stroak,
> Would let them play a while upon the hook.
> Our healthful food the Stomach labours thus,
> At first embracing what it strait doth crush.
> While growing Pains pronounce the Humors crude;
> Deaf to complaints they wait upon the Ill,
> Till some safe Crisis authorize their Skill.
>
> John Dryden, *Astraea Redux*, 169-178.[91]

In his narrative of the Battle of Worcester (1651) in *Plantarum* 6, Cowley will explain that Charles' hour had not yet come: *Nondum data tessera fati* ('Not yet had the die of fate been cast', 6.838).

Related to this emphasis on the timing of actions, and in particular of the act of writing, is the consciousness of the significance of the timing of reading.[92] Cowley attempts at the very outset of the work to convince his Restoration reader to view his poem as a work of the Interregnum and to consider its Royalist colouring in terms of the oppositional discourse of the 1650s rather than the panegyric of the next decade. This sense of the 'right moment' as a punctuation point in a constant flux provides a partial answer to Christopher D'Addario's ultimately nihilistic reading of the *Pindariques* as a work cognizant of the ability of language to generate multiple meanings at a time of political upheaval and which simultaneously

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[90] See Pugh 2010: 49.
[91] Dryden 1660. Dryden's imagery of digestion chimes strikingly with Cowley's analogy of bodily with political process throughout the *Plantarum*.
[92] Helmer J. Helmers has shown how authorial paratexts, by attempting to influence the meaning generated by the reader, expose contemporary writers' awareness of the instability of meaning and the reader's role in its construction (Helmers 2015: 17).

admits both normative and ironic readings.[93] In the next section of this chapter, I look at the elusive and ambiguous political content of *PLD* in its context of the 'right time' of the 1660s. Read in this light, the obscure and clouded discourse of a work from the *mala publica* of the Interregnum is resolved into a Royalist celebration of the restored Stuart monarchy. The herbs and the poem of the epigraph have healing powers, provided they are used in the right way and at the right time.

2.6 Conclusion

The Ovidianism of *PLD* is a complex and multi-valent one, structured around two main strands. The first of these is the concept of the Ovidian career and of the poet of love and exile: this principle operates predominantly in book 1, with poems featuring the Ovidian and cavalier motifs of winter and endurance interspersed with the witty erotic narrative of Water-Lily and Mint. The second strand is the Ovid of narrative poetry, notably the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, which informs both books, underpinning Cowley's depictions of healing, pregnancy and childbirth, and political transformation. Uniting the two is the Janus-like character of the work, standing as it does at a moment of pivotal reversal and change.

3 Science, Poetry and the Body Politic in the *Plantarum Libri Duo*

> Grow Royall Plant, born for your Country's good,
> The hoped cure of our great flux of blood
>
> Richard Fanshawe,
> 'Presented to his Highness in the West, Ann. Dom. 1646', 1-2.[94]

In the previous section, I argued that Cowley's depiction of changes in the human body and of political change is informed by a sense, drawn from the *Metamorphoses*, of a world in constant flux, while the emphasis on the *Fasti* on prescribed behaviour at specific moments in time underpins an unstable and contingent system of meanings. Against this Ovidian background, the elusive and ambiguous political resonances are overtly susceptible to conflicting readings, resolving themselves when read in the Restoration context of the work's publication. Hence work allegedly written during the Interregnum can be read through a Royalist lens as though – whatever the truth of the matter – this had been the poet's design all along. As such, the work contrasts markedly with the multiple obfuscations of the *Pindariques,* whose Interregnum publication date required them to accommodate widely divergent political readings.

I shall now look more closely at the content of *Plantarum* 1-2 both in terms of the work's Royalist agenda (albeit an agenda expressed in the guarded discourse necessary for the

[93] D'Addario 2010: 132.
[94] Davidson 1997.

plausibility of its claim to be the product of the late Interregnum) and in the context of contemporary scientific discourse. I shall first argue for a Royalist slant in the portrayal of the body in book 1, showing how its diseases and cures are to be read as analogies of the Civil War. In the second, and more substantial, part of this section, I shall focus on the female body as presented in book 2. Here I contrast Cowley's dependence on his female source of information, the Laurel, with a contemporary scientific discourse which regularly cast the quest for knowledge in terms of aggressive penetration of the female. Moreover, I shall argue that Cowley's portrayal of the female body in *Plantarum* 2 as benevolent and subservient arises from a Royalist vision of monarchy which recognised the importance of the domestic and the female as essential to the perpetuation of the dynasty. As such it contrasts sharply with an oppositional political discourse which cast the female as emasculating and toxic.[95] These questions of the role of the monarch's domestic sphere will have gained an additional topical relevance in 1662, the year of Charles II's marriage to Catherine of Braganza.[96]

3.1 Conquering the rebel diseases: political bodies and the body politic

> Hisce rudimentis Morbos victura rebelles
> Virtutem induro consolidóque meam.
>
> And with these elements I harden and make firm my virtue, in order to conquer the rebel diseases.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.809-10.

Cowley's insistent use of civic and military imagery to depict the processes of the human body is a strong invitation to political reading. Later in this chapter, I shall argue that, although the ideological cast of his imagery is often ambiguous and obscure, the work ultimately represents a protestation of his Royalist loyalty. Here, I look more generally at the various ways in which this political imagery is deployed. Wormwood compares herself to a Cato of the corrupt city that is the body (1.462-463); Eyebright speaks of the enemies she conquers and the battles she fights (1.728-729); Plantain describes menstrual blood as a purple tyrant (*purpureum tyrannum*, 2.319); for Rose, the accumulation of menstrual blood is analogous to a surplus population which must be sent out to find a home elsewhere (2.239-294); Aristolochia describes herself as triumphing over death (*Ingentes refero victrix de morte triumphos*, 643); she is like a Roman aedile in charge of the pathways of the body (645-646). Perhaps the most extended use of the image is in Myrrha's speech, where the disordered womb is described in terms of an enemy within:

> Quae Superûm invidia est tam multo *milite Mortis*
> Ipsius *Vitae* velle replere *domum*?
> Quid tutum est homini, tua dulcia regna, *Voluptas*,
> Metropolìmque tuam si Dolor Hostis habet? [...]

---

[95] Knoppers 2011: 17-41; Purkiss 2005: 76-78.
[96] On the wedding celebrations of Charles and Catherine, see Madway 2012: 79-103. Despite the universities of Oxford and Cambridge producing commemorative anthologies of epithalamia, literary representations of the marriage celebrations remain under-studied.

[...] Vae miserae (dixit) totius *Corporis Urbi*,
Si *Castellum Uteri* vis inimica tenet!
Eminus hinc dirum iaculatur ubique vaporem,
Fit fuga vasta Animae quâ Vapor ille subit. [....]
[...] Saepe & in alta volans Caput occupat impigra pestis,
Ardentémque Animi fértque rapítque domum.
Barbarico trahitur *Ratio Captiva* Triumpho,
Nunc religata *Oculos*, nunc religata *Manus*.

What envy do the gods possess, that they should wish to fill the seat of life itself with so great an army of death? What safety is there for humankind, if the enemy, pain, holds your sweet realms, pleasure, and your capital city? [...] Alas (she said) for the poor city of the whole body, if an enemy power possesses the fort of the womb! At once it hurls forth from here a dread vapour, and where that vapour secretly makes its way, there is a great rout of the spirit [...] Often the tireless pestilence, flying high takes possession of the head, carries off and plunders the burning house of the mind. Reason is dragged captive in a barbarian triumph, now with its eyes bound, now with its hands.

Plantarum 2.1015-1018, 1021-1024, 1047-1050.

With allusions which lend themselves very readily to topical application, Cowley intensifies the contemporary resonance of his imagery. When Plantain, arguing for the toxicity of menstrual blood, describes menstruation as 'expelling the purple tyrant from the citadel' (2.319), the association of purple with royalty immediately links the image to the Civil War and regicide, though, as we shall see, a more definite reading proves elusive (below, p. 105). Similarly, when Mastic-Tree, in a speech condemning the use of abortifacients, compares infanticide to civil war, there is a strong invitation to seek contemporary resonance:

At tantùm *Natos* civili tollitis irâ,
Arma Novercalis tarda, *Aconita*, manûs.

But you only remove those who have been born in civil anger, Aconite, slow weaponry of the stepmother's hand.

Plantarum 2.743-744.[97]

In the second Cyclamen poem (*Plantarum* 1.877-886), Cowley describes the antipathy of certain plants towards others in terms evocative of the successive regimes of the recent past:

Ecce superbit ovans generosâ *Vite* fugatâ,
Et Capite inflato vile tumescit *olus*:
Victricem Regum debellat hostica Plantam
Brassica: sed prope *Te* stare misella nequit.

Look how the mean pot-herb waxes proud, glorying in the rout of the generous vine, and swells with puffed-up head: the enemy cabbage defeats in war the victorious plant of kings; but the poor little thing cannot stand near you.

Plantarum 1.879-880.[98]

A mean pot-herb, the rustic brassica (a catch-all term for cabbages, cauliflowers and leafy greens such as kale and chard) triumphs arrogantly over the vine, plant of kings, but is in turn displaced by the cyclamen. It might be fanciful to see in the brassica's swollen head an

[97] The association between the death of an infant and civil disorder in turn recalls the opening of Jonson's Cary-Morison ode (*Under-wood 70*). See Moul 2010: 50.
[98] On vegetable antipathy, see P. Davis 2008: 124-125.

allusion to Cromwell's cauliflower warts. Far less strain is required to read in the figure of the Cyclamen, the Janus-like plant who presides over the openings and closings of the body, a reference to the liminal moment of the Restoration.

3.2 Reading the body in *Plantarum* 1

Betony (*Vettonica*, *Plantarum* 1.57-160) is the first herb to be treated individually. Her arrival is carefully announced (1.41-56): as patron of the head (45) she provides a favourable omen (41). Cowley asks that she assist his intellectual enterprise as he attempts to sing of her innumerable virtues (46-52) before adroitly pivoting, via a punning mention of Augustus' physician Musa, to matters political:

> *Musa* tuas iusto celebrâsse volumine laudes
> Dicitur, & partem praeteriisse puto.
> Ipse suos *Caesar* voluit memorare Triumphos.
> Fac, precor, ô Victrix Caesare maior, idem.
>
> Musa is said to have celebrated your praise with a volume that did you justice, and I think that he left a part out. Caesar himself wanted to commemorate his own triumphs. Do the same, I pray, O conqueress greater than Caesar.
>
> *Plantarum* 1.53-56.

Betony opens her speech by declaring her command of the world of the human body, *qua patet humanus nostra est provincia mundus* ('our province is where the human body lies', 59), a body delimited by the twin poles of the head and the feet (62). But her particular concern is with the head, the mind's *aula* – a term which denotes house or hall, but also has the special sense of 'palace', an association reinforced by the mention of the head's *sinuosa palatia* ('winding palaces', 65). She lists her powers over epilepsy, unconsciousness, vertigo, inflammation of the brain, paralysis, insanity and tremors (73-84), before proceeding to explain that she is also effective against chest infections, 'when moisture shuts off the lungs and seizes the heart, and a hostile force takes possession of the airways' (107-110); she defeats the serpent of quartan fever and the hydra of dropsy (115-116); she cures digestive complaints (117-120), jaundice, and kidney- and bladder-stones (121-122); she regulates the menses and vaginal discharge (123-128) and both purges the womb and prevents miscarriage, ensuring that childbirth happens at the right time (*cum natalis sacer ingruit impetus horae*, 129-132). She cures gout (135-136), snakebite (137-142), pain and fatigue (143-7) and restores the colour of the skin (149-150). At the end of the poem, she alludes to the Spanish origins she shares with the Emperor Trajan, comparing his numerous but short-lived benefactions with her own, which are equally numerous, but permanent (151-160). Supporting the text is a total of thirty-one footnotes, predominantly referencing Pliny and Fernel; much of the medical information is corroborated by contemporary herbals.[99]

[99] See e.g. Gerard 1597; Culpeper 1652.

By framing the poem with two Roman emperors, Caesar and Trajan, Cowley encourages the reader to consider the poem's potential for political application, a potential reinforced by the opening emphasis on the head. The traditional allegory of the body politic, which naturally equated the head with the monarch, had been further sharpened by the reading of the regicide as the decapitation of that body and given topical relevance by the use of the metaphor in Hobbes' *Leviathan*: Cowley himself, in a striking passage in book 6 of the *Plantarum*, depicts the post-regicide nation as a shapeless and decapitated corpse, a monstrous trunk (*capite abscisso [...] informe cadaver/Immanis [...] truncus, Plantarum* 6.749-751).[100] With the move to the heart at 107, Cowley appears to allude to another reading of the body politic, one found in Harvey's *De Motu Cordis* as well as in the popular press, in which the heart, not the head, represents the monarch.[101] And, in the long list of ailments against which Betony is effective, can be read an allegory of an ailing body politic, in the manner of the Aesopian fable of the revolt of the belly; in the reference to snakebite is a potential allusion to Cromwell, regularly depicted as a serpent.[102] On this reading, Betony, the *faustum omen* presaging the success of the poet's enterprise (41-44) represents the healing power of the anticipated Restoration, which will both repair the sick polity and provide a secure environment for artistic endeavour.

The poem can however be read rather differently. In the allegorical scheme in which the heart represented the monarch, the head symbolised Reason, Law – or Parliament.[103] The primacy Betony gives to the head echoes John Pym's speech to the Short Parliament on 17 April, 1640:

> We all know that the intellectual part, which ought to govern the rest, ought to be kept from distemper, for it is that which purgeth us from all errors, and prevents other mischiefs for time to come. If the understanding part be hurt the mind cannot perform her function. A parliament is that to the Commonwealth which the soul is to the body, which is only able to apprehend and understand the symptoms of all such diseases which threaten the body politic. It behoves us therefore to keep the faculty of that soul from distempers.
>
> Quoted in Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution*, p. 184.[104]

This allegorical scheme opens up an alternative reading, by which it is Parliament that is under attack, saved by the establishment of the Protectorate, greater than Caesar because non-monarchical, and, as a permanent constitutional change, more lasting than the principate of Trajan. The poem thus appears to sustain two opposed readings. As such, it recalls D'Addario's identification in the *Pindariques* of an exploration of 'the ways in which uncertainty and change can transform language and produce oscillations in meanings.' It also

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[100] Kantorowicz 1957: 199-232; (on Hobbes) N. Smith 1994: 155-163. See Patterson 1991: 126-136. The sixth poem in Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* is addressed 'To Mr. Hobs'; see Nethercot 1931: 150-2.
[101] Sawday 2002: 15-17; McShane Jones 2004: 318. Cowley's poem 'Upon Dr. Harvey' was published in Cowley 1663.
[102] For the importance of this fable in contemporary political discourse, see Patterson 1991: ch. 3; Jenner 2002: 95; (Cromwell as snake) Revard 1993: 402 and n. 12. Cowley describes Cromwell as *serpentium maximus* – 'greatest of serpents' – at *Plantarum* 6.758.
[103] McShane Jones 2004: 318.
[104] Kenyon 1986.

resonates with Corns' unsuccessful 'paroxysm of allegorical decoding' of the scene of the oak and the hewel in 'Upon Appleton House.'[105]

However, consideration of the poem in its temporal context privileges the first, Royalist, reading. In presenting the work as dating from the last years of the Interregnum (*paulo ante foelicissimum regis reditum*), Cowley evokes the period of upheaval following Cromwell's death. During this period, the restoration of the monarchy seemed increasingly likely, and the prognosis for the body politic, at least in Royalist eyes, was encouraging. The fact that Betony is a *faustum omen* suggests that her healing is something that will happen in the future – like the Restoration – rather than something that has been achieved in the past.

The *mens*, which Betony describes as inhabiting the head (*Plantarum* 1.63-64), is rendered as 'soul' by the anonymous 1689 translator, and is given a semi-divine status (*filia Dei*, 68) which is more readily accommodated to the monarch than to Parliament. In a detail evocative of the Royalist emphasis on the incompetence of Charles' counsellors, illness arises from the weakness not of the *mens* itself, but of the head – the *aula* – which surrounds it (69-73).[106] In the graphic list of factors affecting the *fragilem aedem* and *ruinosam casam* (69-70) which the *mens* inhabits – factors including flames, contagion, thunderbolts of disease, spinning vertigo (71-92) – are echoes of the Civil War's 'world turned upside down'.

However, contemporary analogic readings tended to associate the monarch with the heart at least as regularly as with the head, an analogy sharpened by William Harvey's recent discovery of the circulation of the blood.[107] Betony describes the heart as impeded by infection of the lungs (107-108). Moisture (*humor*) seizes (*occupat*) the heart by blocking the lungs (107) and a *vis inimica* holds the airways (*aetherios aditus*, 108). Through Betony's help, the spring breezes blow once more and the seething of the chest is soothed (111-114):

> Cum *Corda* occlusis *Pulmonibus* occupat Humor,
> Aeriósque aditus vis inimica tenet,
> Imparibus tentat conatibus excutere hostem,
> Et petit externam languida *Tussis* opem.
> Me petit; advenio: reseratur semita Cordis,
> Blandáque per notos pertinet aura favos.
> Vitali *Zephyro* mulcentur Pectoris aestus,
> Mitescítque tuus, *Torrida zona*, Calor.

When moisture seizes the heart, blocking the lungs, and an enemy force takes possession of the airways, a feeble cough tries to shake out the enemy with efforts unequal to the foe, and seeks external aid. It seeks me; I come; the pathway of the heart is opened up, and a gentle breeze makes its way through the familiar channels. The burning fevers of the chest are softened by life-giving Zephyrus, and your heat, torrid zone, is abated.

Plantarum 1.107-114

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[105] D'Addario 2010: 132; Corns 1992: 240. See above, pp. 55-56.
[106] Compare Cowley's comment on 'th'ill Conduct of the mated King' in 'Destinie' (*Pindarique Odes*, 7). See also Wilcher 2001: 344; José 1984: 80-81.
[107] Sawday 1995: 233-234.

The language of siege and usurpation demands a political application, but the precise nature of that application remains opaque: is the monarch represented by the head or the heart, and both? And does the does the heart represent the monarch or is this a more general description of a city under siege? Like 'Brutus' and 'Upon Appleton House', 'Betony' seems deliberately to withhold the possibility of resolution.

At the conclusion of the poem, Cowley further complicates a political reading by dismissing the evanescence of Trajan's imperial achievements in favour of Betony's lasting power (157-160). Both Trajan and Betony were native to Spain, but whereas the world had only a short time to enjoy his gifts (*laudes*, 155 and *bonitas,* 156), Betony benefits humankind for ever (*aeternum*, 159). With this final contrast between the virtues of good government and those of nature, Cowley leaves the questions of political analogy of the earlier part of the poem glaringly unresolved.

A consistent reading does however emerge when the poem is sited in the precise context signalled by Cowley in the *Praefatio*, namely the last years of the Interregnum when the possibility of a restored monarchy was becoming increasingly realistic. Location in the same temporal context likewise enables a Royalist reading of the otherwise puzzling poem 'Sage' (*Salvia*, *Plantarum* 1.211-270). 'Sage' opens and closes with the herb's power against forgetfulness, an emphasis at first sight incongruous with the Act of Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion of August 1660, one of the first pieces of legislation by Charles II's Cavalier Parliament. Sage is praised for putting destructive oblivion to flight (*damnosa tuo fugiant oblivia dono*, 213) and for not permitting that which is past to pass away (*Nec tu praeteritum praeteriisse sinis*, 266). Not only does this go against the grain of the tenor of the early Restoration, it also runs counter to Cowley's insistence in the 1656 'Preface' on the need to move on from the past:

> *We* ought not sure, to begin our selves to revive the remembrance of those times and actions for which we have received a *General Amnestie*, as a *favor* from the *Victor*. The truth is, neither *We*, nor *They*, ought by the *Representation* of *Places* and *Images* to make a kind of *Artificial Memory* of those things wherein we are all bound to desire like *Themistocles*, the *Art* of *Oblivion*.
>
> *Poems*, sig. a4^{r}.

As in 'Betony', the body in 'Sage' invites a political reading. Cowley likens the *mens* to a house on a high mountain, surrounded by stone (217-218); it attracts a crowd of powerful spirits, *spirituum [...] turba potentum* (231), an echo of the *turba clientum* clustering in the hall of a Roman magnate; in a military metaphor, these spirits are a *cohors* holding a *concilium* (223-224), and an *agmen* rushing through the open gates (225). When illness strikes, it is an invasion (235), a deluge flooding a soul without military garrison (347-348); the house nods, about to topple (*nutat dubie mox ruitura domus*, 240), in an image reminiscent of the falling ash-tree to which Virgil compares the fall of Troy:

illa usque minatur
et tremefacta comam concusso vertice nutat,
vulneribus donec paulatim evicta supremum
congemuit traxitque iugis avulsa ruinam.

Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.628-631.

Sage brings warmth which dislodges the entrenched enemy (245-246); through her, the ship of the body is steered not by the waves but by a helmsman (251-252).

PLD was of course published after the 1660 Act of Oblivion. But if we read 'Sage' as a product of the period 1658-early 1660, then the oblivion Sage guards against is not that enacted by Charles II with regard to former Parliamentarians, but the 1652 Act of Pardon and Oblivion designed to win the support of former Royalists. In banishing oblivion with the help of Sage, Cowley proudly asserts his Royalist past and repudiates his earlier call for '*Redintegration*' – though without running the risk of publishing this assertion before circumstances have made redundant its subversive potential.

A different kind of body is under consideration in 'Maidenhair Fern' (*Capillus Veneris*, 161-210) – that of the loyal Cavalier. Victoria Moul has discussed the poem's relationship to Ovid, and particularly *Ars Amatoria* 3; I want to draw attention here to its engagement with Catullus 66, the *Coma Berenices*, itself a translation of a Callimachean original which would not have been available to Cowley.[108] Both text and footnotes stress the plant's powers as a hair-conditioner and restorer, and the plant explicitly compares herself with the lock of Berenice:

His Ego pro meritis poteram meruisse videri
Vel *Berenicaeis* altior ire *Comis*.

For these virtues I could have seemed to have deserved to go higher even than the lock of Berenice.

Plantarum 1.207-208.

The link with royalty, and with monarchist panegyric, is reinforced by Maidenhair Fern's injunction to the lover to nurture *laetam Caesariem*, ('happy locks', 205) – a word used by Catullus (66.8) but which also puns on Caesar, and is given special emphasis here by its strong enjambement.[109] And the outcome of a proper application of the plant is the tumbling mane stereotypically associated with the Cavalier, and here unfavourably contrasted with the alternative:

A me formosi lasciva volumina Crinis,
Plaudentisque humeros umbra decora comae.
Me cole quisquis amas; laetam nutrire memento
Caesariem, & toto vertice tende plagas.
At nudum sine honore caput, tritísque capillis
Pannosum, inclusas quàm malè iactat opes?

[108] See Moul 2015a: 226-227; Lehnus 2011: 23-38.
[109] In her discussion of 'Brutus', Stella Revard exposes the contested nature of the term 'Caesar', which can refer both to Cromwell (as in Marvell's 'Horatian Ode') and (regularly) to the assassinated Charles I. Here, the Royalist context established by the allusion to Berenice strongly suggests that the allusion is to the king (Revard 1993: 407).

> From me comes the wanton abundance of beautiful hair, the beautiful canopy of locks which strikes the shoulders. Cultivate me, whoever is a lover, and remember to nourish your lovely hair, and spread your snares from your whole head. But as for a bald head without honour, and with its hair rubbed away in patches, how badly does it advertise the wealth enclosed within?
>
> *Plantarum* 1.175-180.[110]

Again playing to the stereotype of Cavalier sexual appetite, Maidenhair Fern is clear that long hair will attract girls: it is *lasciva*, wanton (a word we saw applied to the aphrodisiac Rocket, above, p. 66); and the plant itself is associated with love (172-174) and with Venus (183).[111]

Victoria Moul writes perceptively of the gender inversion in this poem: while Ovid's advice on haircare is directed at women in order to attract men, Maidenhair Fern addresses men, to enable them to attract women.[112] This inversion, in which the male becomes a passive and to some extent feminised lure, draws some of the sting from the sexually aggressive stereotype both deployed by anti-Royalist polemic and flaunted by Cavaliers themselves.[113] Further distance from the conventional Cavalier is also achieved by Maidenhair Fern's abhorrence of drunkenness (187-198): she is *sobria* (187), and contemptuous of plants who drink up rainwater as though they were not plants (*germina*, 191) but rather Germans drunkenly celebrating a festival (193-194).[114] It is the sober Royalist who will survive the winter of the Interregnum (*non bruma marescit*, n. on 187 (Pliny); *Nec succum exhaurit bruma vel ipsa meum,* 'Nor does even winter itself drain my juice', 198).[115]

But it is important not to overlook the tone here. There is obvious humour in the assertion that girls will never be interested in men with short hair (181-182), and Cowley subtly undercuts Maidenhair's self-importance when he queries the truth of the story of the stellification of the Lock of Berenice in his footnote to 208. The poem shares with Catullus 66 a lightness of touch, a whimsical and knowing sense of the absurdity inherent in their anthropomorphism of, respectively, a hair and a plant. There is an echo, too, of the opening of the *Georgics*, with the constellation Scorpio withdrawing its claws to make room for the newly-stellified Octavian (Virgil, *Georgics* 1.34-5). The poem is a graceful statement of Royalist loyalty, offered implicitly to the king via the link with the *Coma Berenices*, and endowed with an adroit humour which enables it to stop short of sycophancy.

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[110] On the association of the terms Cavalier and Roundhead with distinctive hairstyles, see Roebuck 1999; Corns 1992: 3-4. Jerome de Groot notes the role of long hair as an 'index of loyalty' in Cowley's play *The Guardian* (1642; de Groot 2004: 101-108).
[111] Roebuck 1999: 15-16; Corns 1992: 4.
[112] Moul 2015a: 227.
[113] Corns 1992: 8; Pugh 1010: 21-28. Kathryn R. King has suggested that part of Cowley's appeal to a female audience lay in precisely this absence of a heavily masculinised sexuality (King 2003: 43-63).
[114] Cavalier drunkenness: McShane Jones 2005.
[115] Despite the male gender of the plant's name, she is characterised as female: *ipsa modesta*, 185; *sobria praecipue*, 187.

4 The female body in *Plantarum* 2

In *Plantarum* 1, Cowley expresses his Royalism via the image of the body politic and by his characterisation of individual plants. I now turn to the specifically female body. Focusing particularly on the gynaecological material of book 2, I shall show how Cowley depicts a co-operative and benevolent female body which contrasts markedly to the emphasis in the dominant contemporary discourse on the violence of penetration and on the female body itself as toxic and polluting. I argue further that this positive portrayal of the female is in part a response to an anti-monarchist discourse deeply suspicious of the influence wielded by the queen in the monarch's private, domestic sphere.[116] Cowley's female plants offer a model of subservience and, importantly, good counsel, which attempts to negate misogynistic anxieties as to the role of the queen in a dynastic monarchy.

In the first part of this section, I shall examine the tropes of penetration and opening as metaphors for the acquisition of knowledge. In contrast to a discourse in which scientific enquiry and the uncovering of secrets were closely mapped onto the aggressive penetration of the female body, *PLD*, like Cowley's English odes 'To the Royal Society' and 'To Doctor Harvey', offers a paradigm which resists this imagery of domination, presenting the scientific enquiry as a more collaborative process.[117] In the second part, I shall contrast the benevolent and accommodating female body of the *Plantarum* with contemporary political writing in which the female was deployed to convey disorder, emasculation and decay. Looking at the metaphor of marriage to denote the relationship between monarch and nation, and at the image of childbirth applied to political change, I shall show how, by neutralising and sanitising the female body, *PLD* offers a rehabilitation of the female and, by implication, of dynastic monarchical government.

4.1 Science, poetry and masculinity

Many scholars have read in Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* a response to Bacon's call for a scientific language devoid of poetry and rhetoric.[118] In *The Body Emblazoned* (1995), Jonathan Sawday argues for the gendering of this discourse. Connecting the stripping away of rhetorical embellishment to images in Spenser and Herbert of unveiling a naked truth, he reads this new mode of discourse as masculine, and further links it with a related strain in which the male scientist triumphs over a feminised Nature:

> Like Spenser's pitiless knights, crawling towards the bower of Acrasia intent on lifting the veil and demolishing the world of artifice and sensual delight...the linguistic reformers of the 1650s and 1660s envisaged their task to be a heroic and 'vigorous' assertion of male prowess over a protean and recalcitrant 'female' natural world.
>
> Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*.[119]

[116] Purkiss 2005: 76-78.
[117] See particularly Sawday 1995: ch. 8; Potter 1989: 69-74; Purkiss 2005: 72-78.
[118] See e.g. Jones 1930; Levine 1994; Sawday 1995: 230-242.
[119] Sawday 1995: 236.

He reads this aggressive masculinity as holding particular importance for the early Royal Society, seeking a means of countering the stereotype of the effete Cavalier and of the mannered culture of the Caroline court.[120] Sawday identifies this preoccupation not only in the work of Sprat, Cowley's close friend and literary executor, but also in Cowley's own poetry, notably the Pindarics 'To Mr. Hobbes' and 'To Dr. Scarborough' (both 1656), the 'Ode to the Royal Society' (1668) and 'Upon Dr. Harvey' (published 1663, but dating from the 1650s).

This analysis has recently been critiqued by Claire Preston, who argues persuasively for the importance of the literary and figurative to Bacon's scientific writing, and reads Sprat's call for 'Purity of Speech' as a rejection of the '*needlessly* ornate' and as the desire to clarify a discourse corrupted by the upheavals of civil war.[121] She draws attention to the continued use of literary themes, tropes and genres as vehicles for the expression of scientific discovery.[122] Nonetheless, Cowley does distinguish between poetic and scientific language in the *Plantarum.* I noted above (pp. 29-31) how the *Praefatio* contrasts the sober authority of the prose footnotes with the admission that poets often lie (*Praefatio* 2) and that the pestle and mortar of a catalogue is contrasted with the winding alembic of poetry (*Praefatio* 1). Elsewhere, the footnotes can reveal a tension between empirical fact and poetic fiction, as in book 5, where a lively discussion as to the explanation of dowsing is annoted with a drily sceptical footnote.[123] Moreover, as argued above (p. 53), Cowley's poetry is gendered as feminine, a gendering echoed in the ode 'To the Royal Society':

> So from all Modern Folies He [sc. Philosophy]
> Has vindicated Eloquence and Wit.
> His candid Stile like a clean Stream does slide,
> And his bright Fancy all the way
> Does like the Sun-shine in it play;
> It does like *Thames*, the best of Rivers, glide,
> Where the God does not rudely overturn,
> But gently pour the Crystal Urn,
> And with judicious hand does the whole Current Guide.
> T' has all the Beauties Nature can impart,
> And all the comely Dress without the paint of Art.
>
> 'To the Royal Society', 176-184.[124]

Masculine Philosophy expresses himself in a naturally beautiful, feminine discourse, a 'comely Dress without the paint of Art.'

Sawday's second observation, on the expression in Cowley's odes of the 'masculine codes of sexual possession and male generation' characteristic of the new scientific

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[120] 'Science was to become associated with Royalism as a re-emergent, revivified, ideological and intellectual practice,' Sawday 1995: 238.
[121] Sprat 1667: 42; Preston 2015: 10-11.
[122] Preston 2015: 10-23.
[123] *Plantarum* 5.180-205, with note on 184. Minerva and Apollo are unable to explain the practice, which is understood only by Jupiter (205-208). In the note, Cowley professes first-hand experience of its inefficacy, before gloomily concluding *Habet tamen adhuc magnam auctoritatem hoc genus divinationis* ('However, this kind of divination still commands great authority').
[124] Cowley 1663. While the gender is not explicit, it can be inferred from the reference to the 'paint of Art', and the adjective 'comely', which applies more naturally to the female.

discourse has been challenged by Paul Davis in his readings of the Royal Society and Harvey odes.[125] Davis shows how, in the latter ode, the deployment of the myth of Daphne and Apollo undermines the apparent encomium of Harvey. As emblem of poetry, Apollo's victim Daphne is closely identified with the voice of the poet, her increasingly convoluted attempts to flee mirrored in the twists and turns of poetic diction.[126] This reading is reinforced by consideration of the relationship between science, nature and poetry in *Plantarum* 2, where the Laurel, the transformed Daphne, is the ultimate source of Cowley's poem and provides the final and clinching argument in the menstruation debate. In the report of the meeting of largely female plants in book 2, we find a body of knowledge which is not seized in an act of male sexual aggression, but one which combines the scientific language of the footnotes with the poetic discourse of the main text, presided over by the Laurel, emblem of poetry itself.

4.1.2 Daphne's Lovers: Apollo, Harvey, Cowley

In *Metamorphoses* 1, Ovid tells how Apollo is frustrated in his pursuit of Daphne by her transformation into a laurel tree: '*at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,/arbor eris certe' dixit 'mea'* (1.557-8). Daphne herself remains unattainable.[127] Recent scholarship has emphasised how Daphne's transformation can be figured as an allegory of the writing of poetry, as her body is encased by *tenui libro* (*Metamorphoses* 1.546 – 'thin bark', but also 'a slender book'), her feet are transformed into the metrical feet of the poem (551), and the beauty of her *forma* and *figura* (489, 545, 547) resolve into literary form and figure.[128]

As Christine Rees has shown, early modern English writers responded to Ovid's portrayal of Daphne as an unattainable object of aesthetic perfection, immortalised in art by the creative energies of the poet/Apollo.[129] For Andrew Marvell, the real goal of Apollo's pursuit is the metamorphosed Daphne, not the woman, with the love of the natural world replacing the heat of sexual passion:

> When we have run our passions' heat,
> Love hither makes his best retreat:
> The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
> Still in a tree did end their race.
> Apollo hunted Daphne so,
> Only that she might laurel grow [...]
>
> Marvell, 'The Garden' (pub. 1681), 25-30.[130]

[125] Sawday 1995: 241; P. Davis 2008: 89-93, 111-112.
[126] 'Introducing the myth of Daphne and Apollo necessarily divides Cowley's loyalties [...] he becomes aligned not only with Harvey, 'our Apollo', the god of healing and poetry, but also with Nature, since Daphne [...] was [...] nominated by the god as the emblem of poetic fame.' P. Davis 2008: 92.
[127] Hardie 2002b: 49.
[128] See Farrell 1999: 133-136; Enterline 2000: 48; C. Martindale 2005: 208.
[129] Rees 1971: 256-257.
[130] Text from N. Smith 2007.

Katherine Philips similarly replaces the quest for worldly success with the enjoyment of the pleasures of the garden:

> No other Wealth will I aspire
> But of Nature to admire;
> Nor envy on a Laurel I'll bestow
> Whilst I have any in my Garden grow
> Philips, 'Upon Mr. Abraham Cowley's Retirement. Ode', Poems (1664), p. 240.[131]

The contemplative activity of Marvell and Philips contrasts sharply with the aggressive Harvey, 'our Apollo', in Cowley's ode, where the scientist's 'violent passion' enables him to succeed where Ovid's Apollo failed:

> Coy Nature (which remain'd, though aged grown,
> A Beauteous virgin still, injoy'd by none,
> Nor seen unveil'd by any one)
> When *Harvey's* violent passion she did see,
> Began to tremble, and to flee,
> Took Sanctuary like *Daphne* in a Tree:
> There *Daphnes* Lover stop't, and thought it much
> The very Leaves of her to touch:
> But *Harvey* our *Apollo*, stopt not so,
> Into the Bark, and root he after her did goe:
> No smallest Fibres of a Plant,
> For which the eiebeams Point doth sharpness want,
> His passage after her withstood.
>
> 'To Dr. Harvey',1-13.[132]

Harvey pursues her 'through all the moving wood/Of Lives indow'd with sense' (14-15) until she takes refuge in the human bloodstream (18-19), where the scientist grasps 'this slippery Proteus' until she is compelled to reveal 'her mighty Mysteries' (33-34). Sawday writes trenchantly about the sexual violence of this passage, with its voyeuristic imagery of unveiling and of a sexually aroused male gaze.[133]

This sense of scientific enquiry as a male penetration of a female body of knowledge lies behind Cowley's explicit re-gendering of Philosophy as masculine in his ode 'To the Royal Society':

> (Philosophy, I say, and call it, He,
> For whatsoe're the Painters Fancy be,
> It a Male-virtue seemes to me)
>
> 'To the Royal Society', 5-7.[134]

Nonetheless, in celebrating the triumph of Philosophy enabled by the Royal Society, the overriding emphasis is not on masculinity *per se* but rather maturity. For centuries, Cowley says, Philosophy has been distracted by the vain amusements of art and fancy, 'the sports of wanton Wit', 'the Desserts of Poetry', and 'painted Scenes, and Pageants of the

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[131] Text from Thomas, Greer and Little 1990. The relationship between the works of Philips, Marvell and Cowley is impossible to establish, particularly given the uncertainties as to the date of composition of much of Marvell's poetry. See Pritchard: 1983; Shifflett 1998: 53-54; Scott-Baumann 2013: 90-95; above, p. 17.
[132] Cowley 1663.
[133] Sawday 1995: 240.
[134] *Verses written on several occasions* (1668), p. 38. Text from *Works* (1668).

Brain' (20, 21, 30). These diversions are contrasted to the 'solid meats' and 'vigorous exercise' of experimental science that will enable Philosophy 'to see/The Riches which doe hoorded for him lie/In Natures endless Treasurie' (28-29). But the direct consequence of these 'sports', 'Desserts' and 'Pageants' is not, as Sawday argues, feminisation, but rather infantilisation. Cowley's Philosophy is deliberately kept from reaching maturity by guardians who fear a challenge to their own authority:[135]

> But, oh, the Guardians and the Tutors then,
> (Some negligent, and some ambitious men)
> Would ne're consent to set him Free,
> Or his own Natural Powers to let him see,
> Lest that should put an end to their Autoritie.
>
> 'To the Royal Society', 14-18.

Both infantilisation and feminisation stand in opposition to adult male virility, and, in a patriarchal hierarchy, both represent inferior states. But Sawday's image of a Philosophy lounging 'in the "effeminate" ambience of court culture, gazing at masques [...] whilst nibbling on a delicate sweetmeat' misses not only the central image of a regency (the 'Guardians' and 'Tutors'), but also Cowley's stress on agency. In the second strophe of the poem, the repeated 'they' highlights the culpability of the 'Guardians' and 'Tutors' at least as much as it emphasises the sorry state of the victim:

> That his own business he might quite forget,
> They' amus'd him with the sports of wanton Wit,
> With the Desserts of Poetry they fed him,
> In stead of solid meats t'encrease his force;
> In stead of vigorous exercise they led him
> Into the pleasant Labyrinths of ever-fresh Discourse:
> In stead of carrying him to see
> The Riches which doe hoorded for him lie
> In Natures endless Treasurie,
> They chose his Eye to entertain
> (His curious but not covetous Eye)
> With painted Scenes, and Pageants of the Brain.
>
> 'To the Royal Society', 19-30.

While Cowley does explicitly reject 'the Desserts of Poetry' as an appropriate vehicle for scientific writing, it is not primarily the gendering of poetry that is at issue but rather its childishness. Scientific enquiry is a process proper to the adult male, and its discourse is to be one of unadorned austerity, in contrast to the poetic myths appropriate to children.[136]

This conclusion is however destabilised by the Edenic image at the poem's heart:

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[135] Sawday 1995: 237-238.
[136] Sawday, 1995: 237.

The Orchard's open now, and free;
Bacon has broke that Scar-crow Deitie;
Come, enter, all that will,
Behold the rip'ned Fruit, come gather now your Fill.
Yet still, methinks, we fain would be
Catching at the Forbidden Tree,
We would be like the Deitie,
When Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil, we
Without the Sences aid within our selves would see;
For 'tis God only who can find
All Nature in his Mind.

'To the Royal Society', 58-68.

Scientific knowledge is first depicted as an orchard, guarded by an effigy of Priapus, which Bacon destroys, opening the orchard to all. But the orchard of knowledge obscured by pagan superstition (Priapus) transitions into the Garden of Eden, with its forbidden fruit capable of bestowing divine knowledge. Cowley deftly counterbalances the scientist's search for the empirical knowledge of the orchard with humankind's hubristic yearning for knowledge 'Without the Sences aid', a kind of understanding available only to God. As so often in Cowley's poetry, an image – the orchard – admits of two distinct and conflicting readings.

In *PLD*, as in 'To the Royal Society', poetic discourse is contrasted with scientific discourse, but is not explicitly gendered: both come together in the figure of the Laurel, the representative of the natural world. As the transformed Daphne, the Laurel represents both Nature itself and the process of poetic creation. With his counterpoint between the poetry of the text and the prose of the footnotes, Cowley presents a different kind of writing about the natural world, one which juxtaposes the unadorned language of the new science with the analogies and allegories which had traditionally provided so fertile a way of thinking about the cosmos.[1] In the Ovidian epigraph to the work, with the equal status afforded to *carmine* and *herbis*, poetry and plants come together.

Throughout *Plantarum* 2, Cowley's approach to the Laurel is proprietorial and protective. She is *mea Laurus* (43), *nescia fallendi* (50); her words are trustworthy (*verba habuere fidem*, 478). We are reminded of her connection with Apollo, god of prophecy as well as poetry and healing (*Phoebaeae Laurus*, 477, 478), and in a lengthy footnote, drawing largely on Pliny, Cowley describes her gynaecological properties:

> *Laurus meritò ad hunc conventum accersitur, nam inter praecipuas plantas laudatur quae utero dicantur. Laurus excalfactoriam naturam habet, & foliis & cortice & baccis; itaque decoctum ex his, maximè ex foliis, prodesse vulvis & vesicis convenit. – Prosunt & mensibus foeminarum cum oleo coctae – Cortex radicis cavendus gravidis – Baccae menses trahunt appositae, tritae, vel potae – Sunt qui celeritati partûs multùm conferre putent radicem acetabuli mensurâ in aquâ potam, effiaciùs recentem quàm aridam – Laurus Alexandrina sive Idaea partus celeres facit, secundas etiam pellit, mensesque eodem modo potae*, Plin. *lib*. 23. 8.
>
> The Laurel is deservedly summoned to this meeting, for she is celebrated among the foremost of those plants which are assigned to the uterus. Laurel has a warming nature, in her leaves, bark and berries; and so a decoction of these, most of all of the leaves, is used to help

[1] Sharpe 1989: 7-16; Sawday 1995: 232-235.

> the vulva and bladder. – they are also beneficial for the menses of women, heated with olive oil – The bark of the root must be avoided by pregnant women – The berries bring on the menses when applied, rubbed in, or drunk – There are those who think that the root, drunk in a measuring-cup of water, is of much benefit to the speed of childbirth, and that it is more effective fresh than dried – the Alexandrian or Idaean Laurel brings swift childbirth, and even drives out the afterbirth, and the menses, when drunk in the same way.
>
> Plantarum 2, note on 43.

The poet learns of the meeting through her agency: *edocuit* (45) – a verb which implies a conscious and consensual action which contrasts strongly with the compulsion under which she yields to Harvey. Unlike Cowley, Laurel is able to pass freely between the world of the poet and the female setting of the Botanic Garden; and unlike Apollo's Daphne, whose wind-stirred branches are interpreted as a nod, she is fully capable of communicating in words both to the poet and to her fellow-plants.[2]

Cowley's Laurel, then, appears as an independent agent who controls the flow of information in a fashion which contrasts sharply with her violent interrogation by Harvey and implies a different kind of discourse from that engendered by the questing and penetrative male scientist. On the other hand, she remains a more animated and active presence than either Apollo's transformed Daphne or Philips' and Marvell's passive image of poetic inspiration and rural retreat. Of the 1204 lines of book 2, all but the first fifty consist of the account given by Laurel to the poet; her own contribution to the plants' discussion occupies 134 lines. However, the poet's fifty-line introduction helps to establish his own overall control of the work, reminding the reader of the inescapable truth that the Laurel is his own poetic creation.[3] We should moreover remember that Laurel's contribution to the menstruation debate is one which asserts male primacy: the purpose of menstruation is to enable women to retain the feminine appearance which is attractive to men (579-594). And it is in this contribution that Laurel ultimately identifies herself with the poetic, and above all Ovidian, tradition.

Laurel's argument that menstruation exists to flush out potentially masculinising substances from the female body is, as we have seen, apparently unparalleled in early modern medicine (above, p. 47). Moreover, the evidence she deploys to support this view is highly unconvincing: only humans, she says, exhibit marked differences in appearance between the sexes – male and female horses, cattle, lions, bears, tigers, birds, swans and fish are all identical. Propping up Laurel's arguments are Cowley's footnotes, which, with one exception, refer not to the usual Pliny or Fernel, but to Ovid.[4] Laurel says that it is menstruation that makes the human female different from the male; if a woman fails to menstruate, she grows body hair and her voice deepens, like the Ovidian Iphis or the

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[2] On Daphne's nod, see Hardie 2002b: 47-48. Cowley's metamorphosed plants typically retain the power of speech, in marked contrast to Ovid's. See Moul 2015a: 227-228.

[3] For a Lacanian analysis of Apollo's relationship to the metamorphosed Daphne, see Hardie 2002b: 46-50. Marvell, in 'Upon Appleton House', writes of the relationship between contemplation of nature and the creative process: 'No leaf does tremble in the wind/Which I returning cannot find./Out of these scattered sibyls' leaves/Strange prophecies my fancy weaves' (575-578).

[4] The exception is the note on line 599, which refers to the Hippocratic story of Phaethousa.

Hippocratic example of Phaethousa (*Plantarum* 2.597-600). As Victoria Moul has argued, Laurel, herself the subject of Ovidian metamorphosis, reads this process of the female body in Ovidian terms, as a prophylactic against metamorphosis.[5] The logic of Laurel's natural world is drawn from poetry, not experimental science.

In the ode 'To Dr. Harvey', Cowley depicts a terrified and fugitive Daphne, aggressively overtaken by the libidinous Harvey and held in chains until forced to yield up her secrets. The Laurel of *Plantarum* 2, however, is an apparently willing informant, and keen to take part in a debate designed for the advancement of medical understanding (2.139-162). As Cowley said in the *Praefatio* (above, p. 29-30), his work is not pounded up with a pestle and mortar but rather gently distilled in the alembic of poetry: if Harvey's rape of Daphne evokes the pestle and mortar, then Laurel's happy co-operation suggests the gentle process of the alembic. I want now to consider Cowley's role in the partnership, and how he distances his persona from that of the brutal Harvey of the earlier ode.

4.2 'Made a poet as irremediably as a Child is made an Eunuch': Cowley, poetry and gender[6]

In his essay 'Of Myself', published posthumously in 1668, Cowley describes the discovery of his poetic calling:

> For I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my Mothers Parlour (I know not by what accident, for she her self never in her life read any Book but of Devotion) but there was wont to lie *Spencers* Works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the Stories of the Knights, and Giants, and Monsters, and brave Houses, which I found every where there (Though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees with the tinckling of the Rhyme and Dance of the Numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet as irremediably as a Child is made an Eunuch.
>
> Cowley, 'Of Myself'.[7]

The violence of this image has been noted elsewhere, as has that of the preceding one in which Cowley's early love of poetry is described as 'like Letters cut into the Bark of a young Tree', an image which recalls Hardie's Lacanian analysis of Apollo's inscription of Daphne.[8] This depiction of the poetic vocation as emasculating and degendering is reinforced by 'The Complaint' (from *Verses, Written upon Several Occasions*, 1663), in which Cowley refers to the 'ravisht freedom' which his Muse has taken from him.[9]

Diane Purkiss has argued that seventeenth-century masculinity is characterised particularly by a compulsion to reiterate the separation from the mother, which she sees especially in educational practices which emphasised the school as an alternative locus of

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[5] Moul 2015a: 230-232.
[6] Cowley, 'Of Myself', from *Several Discourses by way of Essays, in Verse and Prose*, p. 144 (*Works*, 1668).
[7] *Works* (1668): 144.
[8] Scott-Baumann 2013: 3; Hardie 2002b: 45-50.
[9] 'The Complaint', 112 (Cowley 1663).

parental authority.[10] In this context, Cowley's description of his boyhood in 'Of Myself' is suggestive, even more so when we recall that, as a posthumous child, he lacked a male parent to complement the authority of the mother. As a boy, he tells us, he tended in his leisure time to avoid the company of his peers; he never mastered Latin grammar by rote-learning – both practices which Purkiss identifies as formative ones in the development of seventeenth-century masculinity.[11] On this reading, the boy Cowley resists the processes through which he will be successfully separated from the female domestic sphere and enabled to attain full masculinity.

When Cowley, by his own account, becomes a poet, he is in his mother's parlour, the inmost female sanctum, when he encounters the work of Spenser, a book which belongs not to his mother's outward-facing persona ('for she her self never in her life read any Book but of Devotion'), but owes its presence to some mysterious, secret cause. Cowley's enchantment with the (feminised) genre of romance, with its fantastical stories and with 'the tinckling of the Rhyme and Dance of the Numbers' seals his fate, and before his twelfth birthday he is destined for a poetic career. The loss of masculine identity which occurs in the secret female recesses of the household, is manifested in his calling as a poet.[12]

The enclosed female domain of Thomasine Cowley's parlour, the site of her son's castration, is echoed by those of *Plantarum* 2, the meeting in the Botanic Garden and the female body itself. Moreover, this text, imbued with a sense of metamorphosis and change deriving from Ovid (above, pp. 72-73) has at its centre the sexual metamorphosis that results from amenorrhea. Cowley's access, via Laurel, to these secret female worlds comes about because of his status as a poet, and the metamorphosis – castration – which it necessitated. Like Phaethousa with her deep voice and hairy body, Cowley the eunuch-poet is neither wholly male nor wholly female. And as such he can engage with the natural world as represented by Laurel in a collaborative and non-adversarial way, in marked contrast to Harvey's sexually aggressive pursuit.

With the emphatic imperatives (*ite, ite, nescite, nescite*) in the opening lines of *Plantarum* 2, and the *mihi* that ends line 10, Cowley encourages the identification of the speaker with the persona of the poet, an identification made explicit as he asks for divine aid in the composition of his poem:

> Viribus arcanis quibus *humida regna* gubernas,
> Ingenii tumeant *Flumina* parva mei.
> Sis *Lucina* mihi, sis fertilis *Ilithyia*;
> Et Cerebri curam Parturientis age.

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[10] Purkiss 2005: 8-19.

[11] 'Even when I was a very young Boy at School, instead of running about on Holy-daies and playing with my fellows; I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a Book, or with some one Companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then too, so much an Enemy to all constraint, that my Masters could never prevail on me, by any perswasions or encouragements, to learn without Book the common rules of Grammar' ('Of Myself', p. 143). See Purkiss 2005: 11, 16-17.

[12] 'The underlying image of castration provides an aggressively sexualized, or rather desexualizing, narrative of reading and poet-making' (Scott-Baumann 2013: 3).

> Grant that the little rivers of my invention may swell with the hidden powers by which you govern the moist realms. Be Lucina to me, be fertile Eilithia; and undertake the care of my birthing brain.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.17-20.

His announcement that he is celebrating the rites of the Bona Dea and his explicit banishing of a male audience (1-2) positions the poet as one who does have entry to this all-female gathering. And he appears further to feminise himself when he compares the act of poetic creation to childbirth, invoking Lucina and Eilithyia (19-20). Moreover, given the image in 'Of Myself' of the poet as an inscribed tree, we might even read Cowley's Laurel as a proxy for the poet, who by virtue of emasculation and tree-metamorphosis gains free passage between the male and female worlds.

However, after the suggestion in lines 1-2 of his own attendance at the Bona Dea rites, he makes clear at 41-42 that it is only through the Laurel that he is able to report proceedings. The metaphor of childbirth, too, loses some of its gendering force when we recall Zeus' parturition of Athena from his head – the very same organ from which Cowley's poem is to be born (20). It is not, however, a female persona that Cowley adopts, but something more akin to the eunuch of 'Of Myself.'

Underpinning this sense of destabilised gendering is the intertextual relationship with *Metamorphoses* 10 – source of the epigraph to *Plantarum* 1-2. This book of the *Metamorphoses* is characterised by its portrayal of same-sex and transgressive relationships: opening with Hymen's journey from the marriage of the transsexual Iphis to that of Orpheus and Eurydice, the book encompasses Orpheus' turn to homoeroticism after the loss of Eurydice, the rape of Ganymede, Apollo's love for, respectively, Cyparissus and Hyacinthus, and Myrrha's incestuous love for her father.[13] In *Plantarum* 2, we find Orpheus in Oxford, when the plants assemble for their meeting: *Orpheam credas signa dedisse lyram* (55). The catalogue of gynaecological herbs which follows is reminiscent of *Metamorphoses* 10's list of the trees which form Orpheus' audience – a list which includes the *innuba laurus* (*Metamorphoses* 10.92). Iphis is mentioned in Laurel's speech as an example of the masculinising effects of amenorrhea (598); the last plant to speak is the myrrh tree, Ovid's Myrrha (989-1181), who is regarded as uniquely well-qualified to discuss the perils of the female reproductive system (973-974).

This world of shifting and indeterminate gender identities is brought abruptly to a close in the final section of book 2, when the gardener arrives in search of herbs with which to alleviate his wife's labour pains.[14] Bobart's generative masculinity and his utilitarian and hierarchical approach to the plants recalls the aggression of the Harvey ode and contrasts

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[13] See e.g. Hardie 2002b: 65-66. For the association of Orpheus with pederasty in early modern England, see e.g. Bate 1994: 51-53; Boehrer 2002: 229.

[14] Although he is described simply as cultor horti in the Latin text, the 1689 translation identifies the gardener as 'Robert', apparently an allusion to Jacob Bobart (c.1599-1680), first Horti Praefectus of the Oxford Botanic Garden. See Willes 2011: 197-199.

sharply with the indistinct and diffuse categorisations of the rest of the poem. His pragmatism and his violent treatment of the plants is underlined by his reliance on the medicinal properties of herbs in preference to the prayers to Juno deployed by his wife (1195-1196). Against the anthropomorphising fantasy of the poet is juxtaposed the utilitarian preoccupations of the man of science.

4.3 *Generis postscaenia pulchri*: inside the female body[15]

The windings of the alembic, the eagerness of the plants to be of use, the willing intermediary Laurel – these are all images which figure a very different relationship between poet and subject matter than the rape of Nature by the scientist Harvey. Moreover, as well as denoting scientific enquiry, tropes of sexual aggression and violence are also used in contemporary political discourse with reference to the discovery of information. The uncovering of the secrets of the female body in *Plantarum* 2 is keyed to this discourse, and the secrets thus disclosed depict that body in terms that explicitly oppose the conventional misogynistic tropes to present a public sphere in which the female may have a legitimate, if limited and subservient, role.

Plantarum 2 opens by announcing that its subject is the secret 'backstage world' of the female sex (above, p. 59). The message is reiterated at the introduction of the Laurel:

> Nec mihi scire licet; Gens cauta silentia servat,
> Et sacra *Conventûs* occulit acta sui.
> Sed mea me *Laurus*, quae iussa interfuit uni,
> (Illa *Gynaecitis* nomine dicta *Tribus*)
> Edocuit viridis secreta negotia coetûs,
> Et quid quaeque *Herba* est, quoque locuta modo.
>
> Nor is it permitted for me to know: a careful tribe, it keeps its silence, and hides the sacred proceedings of its meeting. But my laurel, who, obeying orders, was present at one group (that tribe called by the name of 'womanly'), taught me the secret business of the green assembly, both what each herb said, and how she said it.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.41-46.

This emphasis on the disclosure of secrets resonates with contemporary reactions to the seizure by Parliament of the King's correspondence, published in 1645 as *The King's Cabinet Opened*.[16] Like *Plantarum* 2, the publication used the image of the drawing aside of a stage curtain: 'the traverse Curtain is drawn, and the King writing to *Ormond* and the Queen, what they must not disclose, is presented upon the stage'.[17] Royalist reaction focused on the outrageous behaviour of the king's enemies in making public the contents of a private discourse, notably that with the queen.[18] Cowley's stress in the passages quoted above on

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[15] *Plantarum* 2.5.
[16] *The King's Cabinet Opened* 1645. See Loxley 1997: 129-137; Patterson 1984: 217-218; Potter 1989: 59-64.
[17] *The King's Cabinet Opened* 1645: 4.
[18] Loxley 1997: 131-132; Purkiss 2005: 78.

the impropriety of drawing the curtain and on the inaccessibility of secret material aligns him with this Royalist insistence on the separation of different types of discourse; at the same time, of course, he is exposing this allegedly secret material to the male gaze of his reader.

Diane Purkiss has shown how the rhetoric surrounding *The King's Cabinet Opened* was heavily gendered, arguing that much of the publication's force as Parliamentary propaganda lay in its portrayal of an emasculated monarch inappropriately dominated by the secret female world of the court and, specifically, by a foreign, Catholic queen.[19] Royalist responses recast the letters as belonging to romance narrative, arguing for the inseparability of love and politics and making a counter-claim for the legitimacy of the political involvement of the queen and her satellites.[20] Cowley's secret meeting of female plants, overseen by the moon-goddess who formed so important a part of Henrietta Maria's personal iconography, and presided over by the plant whose Latin name, Artemisia, evokes that goddess, is strongly suggestive of the particular domestic sphere exposed and attacked by *The King's Cabinet Opened*.

As well as alluding to the queen and her circle, the meeting of female plants reflects contemporary use of the satirical trope of the Parliament of Women, Parliament of Ladies or Mistress Parliament, which played on the perceived absurdity of female political agency and which often targeted the women of the queen's circle directly.[21] Such satires, which surely inform the pernicious community of nuns in the republican Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House', were a feature of both Royalist and Parliamentarian writing.[22] Typically depicting women as irrational, unreliable and motivated above all by their sexual appetites, they worked both to belittle their opponents via the comparison to women, and to present women themselves as fundamentally unfit for involvement in the public sphere.

In the Mistress Parliament pamphlets, Parliament itself is figured as a female body and its activities as sex, childbirth or even menstruation. In the anonymous 1648 pamphlet *A New Marriage, Between Mr. King and Mrs. Parliament*, for example, Captain Army steps in to forbid the banns, and calls in Doctor Period to purge Mistress Parliament of her retained menses.[23] Published just a month before 'Pride's Purge', the removal by the military of Members of Parliament likely to oppose the execution of Charles I, the pamphlet allegorises

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[19] Purkiss 2005: 71-85. See esp. p. 72: 'republicans [began] to construct an alternative model of legitimation, one which opposed a private sphere of monarchy, feminised and therefore treacherous and unavailable to scrutiny, to the masculine public sphere in which the letters themselves could be read by the citizens of the Commonwealth.' See also Hughes 2011: 141.
[20] Purkiss 2005: 78.
[21] See Purkiss 2005: 64-70; Hughes 2011: 129-131.
[22] On the nuns as a satire on the circle of Henrietta Maria, see Purkiss 2011: 68-86; Britland 2006: 200.
[23] *A New Marriage, between Mr. King and Mrs. Parliament* 1648. '[The pamphlet] not only demonstrates the satirical feminisation of the parliamentary faction in the civil war but also the politicisation of the female body in war propaganda,' Read 2013: 3.

relations between King, Parliament and army in terms of the reproductive functions of the female body.

Cowley acknowledges this tradition when he describes his assembly of plants as a *viridis coetus*, *viridis Senatus* and *viridis Respublica* ('green assembly', 45, 'green Senate', 129, 'green Republic', 919). Mugwort is the *Concilii praeses* ('president of the Council', 60), the official nature of her role echoed in the description of her predecessor Aristolochia, *magistratu modo* ('recently an official', 61). In contrast to the often rowdy conduct of the Parliaments of Women, the plants' behaviour is consistently disciplined and restrained: they take up position *aequo circo*, *formoso orbe*, ('in a perfect circle', 'in a shapely round', 57-58), a description echoed by the trees' *aequalibus intervallis* ('at equal intervals', 109). Their responses to the various speeches are muted: their leaves rustle (366) and are raised in anticipation (*arrectis frondibus*, 'with leaves pricked up', 131 – an allusion to Virgil's *arrectis auribus*).[24] Significantly, while the political activity of the various Parliaments of Women is typically sexually motivated, Cowley is very clear that his plants do not in any way participate in the processes of sexual reproduction which they describe.[25] Indeed, plants who are metamorphosed humans not infrequently express their relief to have escaped the maelstrom of human sexual activity and its consequences.[26]

Opening up a secret space, raising the curtain, parliaments of women – the currency of all these images in political writing of the mid-seventeenth century drives the reader to seek out political commentary in Cowley's discussion of the female body. This drive becomes all the more compelling when one considers not only Cowley's use of political and military imagery to describe the female body, but also the use in contemporary political writing of the female body as a metaphor for the nation, of blood as an image of war and civil strife, and of birth to denote political change. Instead of the strident harpies of the Parliament of Women pamphlets, or the Mistress Parliament pamphlets' turning of female bodily functions to satirical ends, Cowley presents rather a gentle female helpmeet evocative of the chaste neo-Platonic marriage of Caroline court masque.[27]

4.4 *Purpureum merito depellitis arce tyrannum*: the female body and the body politic[28]

Throughout the first two books of the *Plantarum*, the body is described as a nation at war, and the female body is no exception (above, p. 80). Moreover, seventeenth-century discourse of the body politic frequently figured the nation as the bride of its ruler. Charles I

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[24] *arrectis auribus* – see Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.152, 2.303.
[25] Purkiss 2005: 67-70.
[26] Thus Myrrha, whose present happy state of eternal virginity is contrasted by Mugwort with the sufferings caused by her incestuous love for her father (976-974). The sexual reproduction of plants was not demonstrated until 1682, with Nehemiah Grew's *The Anatomy of Plants* (Grew 1682).
[27] Parry 1981: 184-203.
[28] *Plantarum* 2.319.

chose to wear white to his coronation in order to underline the mystic marriage taking place between monarch and kingdom.[29] In a very different social register, in 1648 one Elizabeth Poole reported to the Army Council her vision of 'a woman which should signifie the weake and imperfect distressed state of this land' and a man who 'should improve his faithfulnesse to the Kingdome, by his diligence in the cure of this person.'[30] Predictably, marriage imagery featured heavily in Restoration panegyric. Dryden's *Astraea Redux* (1660), for example, figures the ship carrying Charles to England as a bride:

> The Naseby now no longer Englands shame,
> But better to be lost in Charles his name
> (Like some unequal Bride in nobler sheets)
> Receives her Lord [...]
>
> John Dryden, *Astraea Redux*, 230-233.[31]

In the hands of Restoration satirists, Charles' notorious sexual incontinence became politicised, with the traditional discourse of 'the king's two bodies' underpinning anxieties as to a blurring between public and private, as the king's private body began to tyrannise the body politic.[32] Thus in Marvell's *Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667), Charles' immediate reaction to the vision of a naked female England, bound and gagged, is to grope her (889-904). Marvell's poem post-dates *Plantarum* 1-2, and can be linked to the hardening of opposition to Charles in the wake of the catastrophes of the mid-1660s. However, the trope can also be found much earlier, as here in Cleveland's lines on the Earl of Essex:

> Impotent *Essex*! Is it not a shame
> Our Commonwealth, like to a *Turkish Dame*,
> Should have an *Eunuch*-Guardian? May she bee
> Ravish'd by *Charles*, rather then sav'd by thee.
>
> John Cleveland, 'To P. Rupert' (1642), 45-49.[33]

Diane Purkiss has commented on this startling image of Charles as 'the successful rapist of the feminine nation.'[34] These instances show the regularity with which the interaction between monarch and nation was figured in terms of a sexual relationship: similarly, the female body in the *Plantarum* is used to represent a feminised body politic, one whose relationship to the monarch is more akin to Dryden's 'unequal Bride' than to Marvell's and Cleveland's victims of royal assault.

It was not just the female body that provided a source of political metaphor. Blood and birth, particularly monstrous births and stillbirths, are regularly found in contemporary political writing. The quotation at the head of this section (p. 79), from Richard Fanshawe's 1646 address to the future Charles II, identifies the civil war as a quasi-menstrual 'flux' of

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[29] See especially Sandstroem 1990.
[30] Firth and Henderson 1891-1901.
[31] Sawday 1992: 181-182.
[32] See Hammond 2006: 117-127.
[33] Text from Morris and Withington (1967).
[34] 'Is Cleveland actually saying [...] that [England's] rebellious, disorderly behaviour is merely greensick lust run riot? [...] Abruptly, even violently, the nation [...] [is] gendered feminine, and femininity here is simply sexual need.' (Purkiss 2005: 125-126.)

blood.[35] When Parliament described Charles I as a 'man of blood', they alluded not only to his alleged shedding of innocent blood but to the polluting nature of blood itself, a trope fully explored by Cowley's Pennyroyal and Dittany.[36] In Diane Purkiss' psychoanalytic reading, the blood shed in battle becomes emblematic of the chaos and liquescence of the female body, which she reads as an expression of anxiety as to the potential erosion of masculine identity in warfare. Hence the flow or accumulation of blood is indelibly associated with menstruation and childbirth.[37] Underlying the focus in *Plantarum* 2 on menstrual blood, on the aborted foetus, and of the gore of childbirth, is the blood of civil war and an attempt to reconcile it to a narrative of rebirth and national security as figured by the feminine beauty which the bloodshed of menstruation ensures.

Restoration panegyric routinely represented the return of Charles II as a new birth. In *Plantarum* 6, for example, the image of Charles' second birth is given added piquancy by the detail of General Monck as midwife, untying the umbilical cord:

> Ecce laborantem manus ut fortissima *Monchi*
> Educit placidè in lucem, nexúsque resolvit
> Obstetrixque tibi est!
>
> See how the most valiant hand of Monck calmly brings you into the light as you struggle, and unties the cord and acts as your midwife!
>
> Plantarum 6.1042-4.

On the other hand, as Ann Hughes has shown, civil turmoil was frequently figured through grotesque pregnancy and monstrous birth, both in satirical fantasy and in allegedly factual accounts of deformed children.[38] In one of the 1648 Mistress Parliament pamphlets, *Mistris Parliament Brought To Bed of a Monstrous Childe of Deformation* (1648), Parliament is depicted as the promiscuous lover of, among others, Fairfax and Cromwell, who, after seven years' pregnancy is beset by a labour in which she vomits up the blood of Strafford and eventually gives birth to a headless monster with the feet of a bear.[39] Mary Fissell has linked Interregnum accounts of monstrous and particularly headless births to fears of the loss of control of female sexuality resulting from the forcible removal of the king, who represented both the head of the body politic and the *paterfamilias*, the head-of-household, of the nation.[40] Again, while the elegant Ovidian Latin of Cowley's Botanic Garden is radically different from the crude and vigorous *double-entendre* of the pamphlets, pregnancy and childbirth feature

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[35] Menstrual blood, as arising from processes within the body itself, is a particularly apt metaphor for civil war.
[36] See Crawford 1977: 42.
[37] Purkiss 2005: 35-45, 111-113. 'Polluting blood is feminine and feminising [...] All newborn babies are covered in blood, covered in the filth of femininity. It is the task of masculinity to break free of this womb-filth [...]' (113).
[38] Hughes 2011: 131-133. Cressy 2004: 40-63.
[39] *Mistris Parliament Presented in Her Bed* 1648.
[40] Fissell 2006: 162.

so strongly in contemporary political discourse that the reader of the *Plantarum* should be alert to political subtexts.

4.5 Menstruation and Civil War: Pennyroyal, Dittany, Plantain, Rose, Laurel.

Laurel's use of an argument not found in contemporary medical writing, and of Ovidian examples which are empirically incorrect, can be read as a coded signal to the reader to look for meaning beyond the straightforwardly scientific (above, p. 47).[41] Given the prevalence of menstrual blood – Fanshawe's 'monstrous flux' – in the discourse of civil war, the debate in the first half of *Plantarum* 2 becomes legible as an attempt to create meaning from the traumatic political upheaval of the preceding decades, a process which was gathering momentum in the closing years of the Interregnum and became urgent in the early Restoration.[42]

On this reading, Pennyroyal's speech, addressing the ill-effects of amenorrhea, alludes to the ravages of civil war on the body politic:

> Sed clausas *Uteri* si repperit obice portas,
> Legitimúmque illi fortè negatur iter;
> Tum furit, exacuítque aestum: pars crassior haeret,
> Vicinísque movet bella nefanda locis;
>
> But if it finds the gates of the uterus closed by an obstruction, and the permitted route is perchance denied it, then it rages, and sharpens the fever, and part sticks fast, grown too thick, and stirs unspeakable war in the neighbouring places.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.217-222.

Pennyroyal's description of the amenorrheic girl, with her sulphureous pallor, her cravings for unlikely foodstuffs, recalls the greensick Muse of Cleveland's 'To P. Rupert', as well as the melancholy maiden of *Last Instructions to a Painter*:

> Ah quoties verno gemmantes flore *puellas*
> (Multa *sagittifero* iam meditante *Deo*)
> Hic ferus exurit subitâ rubigine Morbus?
> Flet deceptus *Amor*, tristis *Amator* abit.
> Inficit ora virens, ipsa inficit *oscula* pallor;
> Tingit ut afflatas *Sulphuris* aura *Rosas*.
> Carbones Cinerésque vorant gypsúmque tenacem.
> O foeda, et verè iam *Malesuada Fames*!
> Non edit haec *Virgo*, scelus est dixisse; sed illa
> In ieiunanti *Virgine Morbus* edit.
>
> Ah how often does this fierce illness with its sudden blight burn up girls (when the arrow-wielding god is already making great plans) as they budded in their springtime flowering? Love weeps, deceived, the lover departs sadly. Green pallor infects her face, it infects her kisses themselves, as the waft of sulphur taints the roses it breathes upon. They devour coal and

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[41] I would argue that a similar process is at work in Birthwort's speech, where she refers to her ability to poison fish – a detail found in Pliny (*NH* 25.98) but which had been conclusively discredited by the Venetian humanist Niccolò Leoniceno (1428-1524) in his *De Plinii et plurium aliorum medicorum in medecina erroribus* (1492; Premuda 1958). That this information was readily available, even to the non-specialist, is clear from its inclusion in Parkinson 1629. See also E. Greene 1909: 548-550.

[42] Purkiss 2005: 34-35; Neufeld 2013: 1-4, 17-19.

> cinders and sticky gypsum. O foul hunger, that now truly urges on to evil acts! It is not the girl who eats these things – it is a crime to have said it; but the disease eats them in the ailing girl.
> *Plantarum* 2.193-202.

The girl herself is blameless; but the retained menstrual blood, expertly carried around the body by Harvey's circulatory system, is pernicious and toxic, affecting the liver, heart, lungs, head and feet (225-244).

As with so much of Cowley's Interregnum poetry, Pennyroyal's speech resists a neat allegorical reading. However, it is the king who is conventionally figured as the bridegroom of the nation, and the most natural reading here is a Royalist one. In the greensick girl's *tristis amator* is an allusion to the monarch, the nation's bridegroom, who goes sadly away, repulsed by the depredations wrought by the enemy within. An England racked by the internal corrosion of civil war is no longer fit for monarchy.

Dittany's speech treats the toxicity of menstrual blood which has left the body, and addresses the menstruating woman as pollutant. Her overt misogyny owes much to Puritan anxieties over female sexuality:

> Ah! nimiùm *Mulier* facie confisa superbit;
> Ah! nimiò illa nimis se putat esse *Deam*.
> Viribus immodicis, heu! *non civiliter* usa,
> Mittit adorantes sub iuga saeva *viros*.
> Tu verò humanas, *Dea non purissima*, sordes
> Respice, & esto memor quid tibi *Luna* ferat.
> Inspice tunc *Speculum*, quo nunc decepta ferocis:
> Tunc verè quàm sis *Pulchra* videre potes.
> Tunc *Corruptorem corrumpis* dira nitentem,
> Et diuturna tui certáque signa gerit.
> Tunc Furia, propriaeque Venefica Imaginis audis
> Quanta lues! Umbrae pestifera ipsa tuae!

> Ah! A woman is too arrogant, trusting in her beauty, Ah! Too much, too much does she think she is a goddess, alas! Using her excessive power in barbarous ways she sends her male admirers beneath her savage yoke. You indeed, you goddess by no means pure, consider your human filth, and be mindful of what the moon brings you. Look then at your mirror, by whose deceit you now wax fierce, then you are able to see in truth how beautiful you are. Then, dread one, you corrupt the shining corrupter, and it bears your sure and lasting signs. Then, Fury, and poisoner of your own image, you hear what a pestilence you are! You yourself the bringer of plague to your own shadow!
> *Plantarum* 2.293-294.[43]

For Pennyroyal, the female body was a hapless victim; for Dittany, the toxic blood is part and parcel of the body, the menstruating woman as much a pollutant as the blood that leaks out of her. Moreover, underlying the reference to the woman who believes herself a goddess and to the power of the moon is a veiled attack on Henrietta Maria, who was so often figured as a divinity in Caroline court masque and in whose iconography Diana figured prominently. It is a relatively short step from this identification to a reading of Dittany's words as attributing the breakdown in relations between king and Parliament to the malign influence

[43] See e.g. Purkiss 2005: 51-60.

of a female-dominated court.[44] The other plants' condemnation of Dittany to some extent distances the poet from her argument, but not conclusively:

> Námque ibi *foemineo* multùm indulgetur *honori*,
> Et visa est temerè verba prophana loqui.
>
> For there the female reputation is greatly indulged, and she seemed recklessly to speak words of sacrilege.
>
> Plantarum 2.309-310

Plantain depicts menstruation as the purple tyrant (319) with poisoned weapons and a column of diseases in his train (323-324) – an image which demands a political reading. But is Plantain a Parliamentarian herb, for whom the tyrant is the monarch, clothed in royal purple, or is she a Royalist, alluding to the ermine-lined purple robe presented to Cromwell at his installation as Lord Protector, and in which he was buried in 1658?[45] And the murderous blood which is rightly driven from the fatherland (*Eiicitur patria iure homicida cruor*, 320): is that an allusion to Charles I as 'that man of blood', or to the murderous blood of the regicide?

Attempting to pin down Plantain's political allegiance, however, risks missing the main thrust of her speech. Plaintain is highly critical of Dittany's sensationalism: she allows the toxicity of menstrual blood, but accuses Dittany of exaggerating its dangers and creating needless anxiety:

> Sed quid opus iusto superaddere vana timori
> *Terricula*, & magnum magnificare malum?
> Dum nimiùm tragicè saevum depingitis hostem,
> Horribilis magis est, credibilisque minús.
> *Heroëm minuit* fictis quem laudibus *auget*,
> Et demit *verae* gloria *falsa* fidem.
>
> But what need is there to add empty terrors to justifiable fear, and to magnify a great trouble? While you depict the fierce enemy in your over-tragic vein, it is more horrible, but less believable. One diminishes a hero if one increases him with invented glories, and false glory removes trust from true glory.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.325-330.

Plantain's restrained and rational approach to conveying the dangers of menstrual blood represents a call for a similarly measured handling of the traumatic events of the recent past, of the tyrant crushing life with his proud dominion (*imperio vitam premit ille superbo*, 321) and arrogantly forcing it to endure unspeakable crimes (*cogit et insultans multa nefanda pati*, 322).

Rose responds to Plantain and Dittany with the Galenic view that menstrual blood is used to nurture the foetus and that menstruation is a natural process which prevents a

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[44] For the currency of this view, see above, p.99; Purkiss 2005: 74-75.
[45] Cromwell's robe: Rutt 1828: 511-515.; death, Heath 1663: 188. See the discussion in Knoppers 2000: 136-153.

surplus from accumulating if conception does not occur. After birth, the blood becomes breast milk:

> Mutato occurit mutatus tramite & ipse,
> Secretam emensus qualem *Arethusa* viam;
> *Mammarúmque* duplex gemino de *Fonte* resurgit,
> Flumine vel ripis candidiore suis.
>
> Changed itself, it travels by a changed path, measuring out a secret way like Arethusa, and it resurfaces twofold, from the twin springs of the breasts, in a stream whiter even than its banks.
>
> *Plantarum* 2.425-428.

The female body becomes a landscape, the river of milk flowing underground like the Arethusa of *Metamorphoses* 5, before emerging as a twofold spring, whiter even than the breasts, its banks.[46] The metaphor of the mother as the land encourages a reading of the father as the monarch (above, p. 21); on this reading, menstruation occurs as a result of a failure to conceive through the absence of the male. Rose's speech thus becomes a commentary on the effects of the civil war and regicide, of bloodshed and infertility resulting from the removal of the monarch.[47]

It is however Laurel's speech which closes the debate, and which has particular valency not only through its position but also through Laurel's privileged role as narrator and through her association with Apollo, god of prophecy, poetry and healing. Laurel's view of menstruation is resolutely upbeat: she presents it as fundamental to an important difference between humans and other species, the different physiognomy of the two sexes which makes sex an aesthetic as well as physical experience (579-588). A woman who fails to menstruate grows body hair and her voice deepens, as with Ovid's Iphis and the Hippocratic case of Phaethousa (595-604).

The lack of scientific foundation for Laurel's argument demands an alternative reading. Read through a political lens, the masculinised maiden represents an England for whom the long bloodless years of the Caroline peace represent a kind of amenorrhea. Re-feminised by the bloodshed of civil war and restored to the full bloom of her beauty, she is readied for the arrival of her bridegroom. Whether that bridegroom is to be read as Charles II or Cromwell is not explicitly resolved. However, given the generally monarchical application of the trope, and given the alleged late Interregnum context of composition, the allusion reads more naturally as a coded anticipation of the Restoration than as a nostalgic evocation of the Protectorate, particularly given the regime's recent collapse. Laurel's speech, as the only contribution to the debate which is anticipatory rather than retrospective, chooses to present

[46] On this passage, see Moul 2015a: 229.
[47] See above, pp. 102-3, on the connection between dysfunctional birth and the figuration of the regicide as the removal of the father.

the civil war as a necessary precursor to the Restoration, and enables a teleological reading of the national trauma which can contribute to its assimilation.

4.6 Myrrha and the wandering womb

Plantarum 2 ends with the speech of Myrrha, the incestuous daughter of *Metamorphoses* 10, mother of Adonis, who at Mugwort's behest addresses the subject of hysteria. With this closing appearance of Myrrha, Cowley completes his set of allusions – the epigraph, Orpheus, the catalogue of herbs, Iphis – to *Metamorphoses* 10, the book of transgressive sexual relationships (above, p. 97). Myrrha omits the narrative of her story (above, p. 63): what is reported is Myrrha's lachrymose account of the countless travails of the womb:

> Tum verò innumeros Uteri (haud ignara) labores
> Flebilibus fertur questa fuisse modis.
> Vix ego, si ora mihi dentur *Muliebria* centum,
> Et detur pulmo roboris instar habens,
> Tot genera & formas et nomina saeva malorum,
> Tot varii vultûs monstra referre queam.
> Quae superûm invidia est tam multo *milite Mortis*
> Ipsius *Vitae* velle replere *domum*?

> Then indeed she is said to have lamented the innumerable travails of the womb (for she was by no means ignorant of them) in tearful strains. If I were given a hundred female mouths and lungs possessing the likeness of oak, I could scarcely relate the many kinds and shapes and savage names of all the troubles, the many prodigies of various appearance. What envy do the gods possess, that they should wish to fill the seat of life itself with so great an army of death?
>
> *Plantarum* 2.1009-1014.

The tearful strains of Myrrha's lament recall the Ovidian detail of the miraculous sounds of Orpheus' severed head (*flebile nescio quid queritur lyra, flebile* [...] *flebile*, *Metamorphoses* 11.52), further intensifying the connection with *Metamorphoses* 10, in which the majority of the Orpheus story is told. Myrrha, like Orpheus, is a compelling and authoritative narrator; unlike Orpheus, whose *flebile* utterance is inarticulate and meaningless (*nescio quid*), she speaks at length and in detail, about the disorders of the womb.

The struggle to overcome these disorders is described in terms which evoke the myth of Hercules. Like the ancient hero, the womb has *innumeros labores*; they are monsters of many different kinds; and, like the labours of Hercules, they arise through the envy of the gods (*invidia deorum*). But from the very masculine Hercules Cowley switches abruptly to the feminine, when the womb is likened to *dulcia regna/Metropolimque* ('sweet realms and Mother-City', 1017-1018). The womb is the kingdom and the city as well as the heroic militia which battles for its protection; a few lines later, at 1022, it is the fortress, the *castellum*, of the whole body.

From the womb is emitted a noxious vapour, which makes the stomach refuse food (1027-1030), and shakes the heart (*palatia cordis,* 1031); the drum, *tympana*, of the weakened pulse sounds the retreat of the soul (1035-1036). From this point, all is gloom –

luctusque metusque odiumque diei (1041); the executioner's noose binds the throat (1044). Next the head is seized, and Reason is led, blindfold, in a barbarian triumph (1047-1050), whereupon madness takes over (1051-1064) until the hysteric is indistinguishable from a corpse (1066). Defeat, execution, madness all strongly suggest a Royalist account of the progression from Civil War through regicide to the living death of the Protectorate. Moreover, with the triumph over Reason, Cowley strongly evokes his own declared dismantling 'of all the *Works* and *Fortifications* of *Wit* and *Reason*' in the 'Preface' to *Poems* (1656).

Myrrha's cure for the hysteric is the traditional one of luring the womb back to its proper place via a combination of unpleasant smells applied to the nose and pleasant ones to the uterus (1067-1102). The hysteric's reaction is dramatic, with a noisy evacuation (1105-1108) followed by a return of *purpureus calor* (1110). It is entirely possible, given the work's 1662 publication date, that the substances applied to the nose represent Monck and his army in Scotland and those applied to the uterus the prospect of reconciliation and indemnity offered by a restored monarchy and formally ratified in April 1660.[48] If Cowley really composed this section before the Restoration, the description of the dissolution of the Rump and the return of Charles II is remarkably prescient.

5 Conclusion

The bodies of *Plantarum* 2 are deeply informed by an Ovidian sense of change – from sickness to health, from female to male – and of timeliness, the need for bodily processes, as well as the act of reading itself, to be performed at the appropriate time. However, Cowley takes these changing bodies in a quite un-Ovidian direction, using political and military imagery to invoke the traditional metaphor of the body politic and to reflect on the recent experience of civil war and regicide, and the anticipation of a restored monarchy.

Cowley's account of the female body as essentially benign, the prominence he gives to the female voice, particularly that of Laurel, and his depiction of his relationship as poet with the body of knowledge Laurel represents, all stand in stark contrast to the typically aggressive and misogynistic scientific and political discourse of the mid-seventeenth century. In so doing, he provides a model which both legitimates his poetic writing on the natural world and asserts its difference from the scientific activities of the Royal Society; he also gives an assertive justification of the role in government of the monarch's domestic sphere, one which both looks backwards to the court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria and forward to that of the newly-married Charles II and Catherine of Braganza.

It would clearly be a mistake to read *Plantarum* 2 as a purely – or even, perhaps, primarily – allegorical text in the manner of, say, Howell's *Dodona's Grove*. The above

[48] Monck had been approached by Charles II as early as 1655 and his movements were keenly observed between the death of Cromwell in September 1658 and his march to London in early 1660.

analysis has largely omitted the work's genuine engagement with early modern science, particularly Harvey's work on the circulation of the blood and on generation, and its intertextual relationship with Lucretius. What I have attempted to show, however, is Cowley's consciousness of the status of his poetic discourse as something distinctly other than the scientific prose which was beginning to take shape; and the extent to which his writing engages with the political issues of his day.

Chapter Two: The Republic of Flowers

Horace and Henrietta Maria in *Plantarum* 3-4.

Books 3 and 4 of the *Plantarum* depict a meeting of flowers on the banks of the Thames. Here the goddess Flora presides over a contest to find the queen of the flowers, with the individual plants making their respective cases in a series of inset lyric odes. But this is no rococo pastoral fantasy: the contest takes place on 1 May 1660, the date of the Restoration. The narrative is thus given a political edge, one which emerges most strongly at the end of book 4, where Flora unexpectedly resolves the competing claims of the flowers with the establishment of a republic (4.1060-1061).

In this chapter, I argue that this surprising conclusion to the book is nonetheless consistent with Cowley's stance as a Royalist poet. Arguing that the debate represents a Stoic *negotium animi*, I show how Cowley uses Horatian lyric forms within a structure of contesting ethical and political viewpoints that itself derives from the eclecticism of Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles*, presenting a debate which articulates different models of kingship.

Underpinning this debate are the themes and imagery of Caroline masque, and above all the late Jonsonian masque *Chloridia* (1631), in which Henrietta Maria danced the role of Chloris/Flora. Intertextual engagement with Jonson, himself an influential Horatian, reinforces and inflects the Horatianism of the books, while the lyric odes of individual flowers are informed by the neo-Platonic values strongly associated with the court of Henrietta Maria and regularly explored in the masques of the 1630s. The speeches in book 3 are dominated by the neo-Platonic qualities of peace, beauty and healing, to be followed in book 4 by a sequence of poems, largely spoken by male-gendered flowers, which present contrasting themes of wealth, splendour and aggression. In keeping with the range of meanings which the term could carry in Early Modern discourse (below, pp. 139-140), Flora's republic is one of moderate royalism, in which the right to rule is dependent not merely on birth or wealth but also on merit. Hence the republic of flowers represents a constitutional settlement which itself reflects the changed character of the restored Stuart monarchy.[1]

1 *Plantarum* 3-4: outline of contents

For a detailed table, see the Appendix.[2]

[1] See especially Pugh 2010: 7-9; Hammond 2006: 107-114; Maguire 1992: 138-145; MacLean 1990: 256-264.
[2] See also the outline in Monreal 2010: 278-284 and the summary in Moul 2012: 87-88.

The narrative parts of the two books are in elegiac couplets. Book 3 opens (1-56) with a description of its setting on the banks of the Thames, and its date, 1 May. The precise location remains unspecified: possibilities include London, where Henrietta Maria inhabited Somerset House on the Strand; Oxford, the setting for book 2; and Barnelmes or Chertsey, Cowley's homes in the 1660s.[3] The poet then specifies the year as 1660 (57): this is the May of the Restoration, which Cowley the Royalist proclaims in fulsome terms. The year is *pulcherrimus* ('most beautiful', 3.57), *aureus* ('golden', 59), bringer of peace to the whole world (61); it repairs the damage of twenty years and brings order to chaos (65-66). Cowley then introduces the goddess Flora/Chloris, an allusion to Henrietta Maria, who, following her performance of the role in *Chloridia*, routinely appears as 'Chloris' in contemporary poetry.[4] 1 May, Cowley tells us, is the date of Chloris' wedding to Zephyrus, which led to her transformation into the goddess Flora (13-16); the seventeenth-century reader may have been aware that it was also, in the Julian calendar, the date of Henrietta's proxy marriage to Charles I in Paris.[5] In 1660, Flora returns to Britain, riding on the back of a rainbow (*curvatae Iridis*, 73), and establishes her court on the banks of the Thames (71-80), *cui chara ante alias et vetus hospes erat* ('to whom she was beloved before other women, as well as a former guest', 78). Like books 1-2, published after the Restoration but allegedly composed during the Interregnum, books 3-4 look both to the past and the future, to the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta and to the reign of their son Charles II.

Flora summons a meeting of flowers, who attend in their Platonic forms – real flowers are incapable of locomotion (87-94). The competition to decide the queen of the flowers is announced at 117-124, though this competition includes both male and female flowers. Seventeen plants present themselves as candidates, and their inset poems, together with Flora's words, make up the speech *in propria persona* in the two books. The gendering of these plants typically follows that of their Latin name: thus Violet (*Viola*, 3.483-538), Auricula (3.553-586), Anemone (3.633-672), Tulip (*Tulipa,* 3.753-804), Crown Imperial (*Corona Imperialis,* 3.681-724), Iris (3.809-879) and Rose (*Rosa*, 3.964-1055) are described only with feminine adjectives and pronouns; Narcissus (3.599-622), Amaranthus (4.1002-1029), Sunflower (*Flos Solis*, 4.830-855), Gillyflower (*Flos Iovis*, 4.860-887) and Crocus (4.916-987) with masculine ones. Lily (*Lilium Candidum*, 4.658-705) is gendered with the feminine adjective *dominam*, despite the neuter gender of *lilium* (4.709). Hellebore (*Helleborus Niger*, 3.225-340) and Peony (*Paeonia*, 3.898-943) are gendered inconsistently, with a mixture of

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[3] Given that Cowley had written in celebration of Henrietta's renewed residency of Somerset House ('On the Queen's Repairing Somerset House', in *Verses, Written Upon Several Occasions* (1663)), it seems most likely that Flora's court assembled in the extensive grounds off the Strand. However, Sprat's description of Cowley's garden of retirement as *In amoenissima Thamesis Ripa* suggests that he, at least, may envisage a setting at Barnelmes or Chertsey ('on the most delightful bank of the Thames', *De Vita*, sig. a3^{v}).

[4] S. Clarke 2010a: 233-234 traces the identification to *Chloridia*. See also Kilgour 2004: 3; Loxley 1997: 239, n. 95.

[5] Britland 2006: 19.

masculine and feminine adjectives and pronouns.[6] In 'Poppy' (*Papaver*, 4.720-803) and 'Moly' (4.515-429) there no adjectives or pronouns indicating the gender of the plant. All the female plants speak in Horatian lyric metres, with the exception of Iris and Hellebore (hendecasyllables and elegiacs respectively); in addition to lyrics, the male plants use hendecasyllables (Crocus) and two epodic metres (Sunflower, Gillyflower). The female plants are largely clustered in book 3, with Lily the only explicitly female flower to speak in 4; conversely, in 3, only Narcissus is firmly gendered male.

After a description of the arena and Flora's ceremonial dais (127-172) the contest begins with Flora summoning the flowers of winter. The most prominent of these, the Christmas rose, *Helleborus niger*, gives a lengthy speech in elegiacs (225-340). Spring flowers then enter the fray, with speeches in (largely) Horatian lyric metres: Violet (Sapphics, 483-538), Auricula (First Asclepiad, 553-586), Narcissus (Fourth Asclepiad, 599-622), Anemone (Third Asclepiad, 633-672), Crown Imperial (Alcaics, 681-724,), Tulip (Second Asclepiad, 753-804), Iris (hendecasyllables, 809-879), Peony (iambic trimeter plus iambic dimeter, 898-943), Rose (Sapphics, 963-1055).[7] The book ends with an excursus on the Wars of the Roses, from which the poet pulls himself sharply back in the closing lines (1116-1123).

Book 4 begins with a reflection on the trope of the 'happy man' (4.1-48), a passage indebted to Virgil's Old Man of Corycia (*Georgics* 4.125-148) and to Horace's second *Epode*, ending with a second *Quo, Musa, rapis me?* (49). There follows a sequence of epigrams in elegiacs as the lengthy procession of over forty individually-named summer flowers is introduced (63-502). The first to speak *in propria persona* is Moly (Greater Archilochean plus iambic dimeter catalectic, 515-529), whose speech is followed by Flora's account of her unsuccessful attempt to propagate the Phoenix plant (530-657). The remaining summer flowers are Lily (Alcaics, 658-705), Poppy (Sapphics, 720-803), Sunflower (dactylic hexameter plus iambic trimeter, 830-855) and Gillyflower (dactylic hexameter plus dactylic tetrameter, 860-887); autumn flowers are represented by Crocus (hendecasyllables, 916-987) and Amaranthus (Second Asclepiad, 1002-1029). Finally Flora pronounces her verdict: as a Roman goddess, she cannot endorse monarchy, and instead establishes a republic, with Rose and Lily as consuls (1048-1069).

This seems a startlingly odd conclusion to a narrative which begins with overt celebration of the restored monarchy. In order to reconcile the two, I begin by looking at the

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[6] Hellebore: *Solus hic ausus est*, 221; but *ausa*, *sola*, 293-294. Peony: *Comitatus coniuge sola*, 3.880; *Fretus*, 896; *abit ille*, 944; but *arrogaturam*, 908; *ingressam*, 934. In my discussion of Hellebore (below, pp. 140-142), I read *ausa* and *sola* as indicating a female identity, with *solus* and *ausus* retaining the masculine gender of *helleborus* in line 20.

[7] The scheme for the numbering of the Asclepiadic metres follows that of Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, which is also adopted by Monreal 2010.

books' Horatian structuring, which allows the articulation of a polyphony of conflicting and contesting viewpoints.

2 Horace in *Plantarum* 3-4

> *Belinda*: Oh Gad! I have a great passion for Cowley. Don't you admire him?
>
> *Sharper*: Oh madam! he was our English Horace.
>
> William Congreve, *The Old Bachelor* (1693), Act 4, Scene 11.

> The third and fourth discourse of Flowers in all the variety of Catullus and Horaces Numbers: For the last of which Authors he had a peculiar Reverence, and imitated him, not only in the stately and numerous pace of his *Odes* and *Epodes*, but in the familiar easiness of his Epistles, and Speeches.
>
> Sprat, *Life*, sig. Ac2^{v}.

Even without Sprat's helpful signposting, the presence of Horace in these two books is immediately evident. The inset lyrics recall both the *Odes* and, in the case of Sunflower and Gillyflower, the *Epodes*; Horace the country-lover is evoked in the rural setting and in the opening of book 4. Horatian tags, too, keep the poet to the fore: *quo me rapis* (3.116, 4.49) recalls the opening of *Odes* 3.25 (*quo me Bacche rapis*); Iris' *Ridenti mihi dulce, dulce olenti* ('me, smiling sweetly, sweetly scented' 3.829) echoes *Odes* 1.22.24 despite the non-Horatian hendecasyllabic metre.

However, there is much in the books that is quite unlike anything found in Horace. The inset odes may (for the most part) be Horatian in metre and, as we shall see, develop Horatian themes, but they also owe much to the neo-Latin lyric tradition, in terms of both form and language.[8] Striking too is the generic blend which is so characteristic of the *Plantarum*: the deployment of lyric metres within an elegiac frame is unparalleled in classical literature, and unusual in neo-Latin verse. Unusual too is the inclusion of factual content within poems in lyric metres, a content whose presence is emphasised by the extensive apparatus of footnotes.[9]

The inset lyric pieces indubitably provide a means of lightening the botanical material, an admixture of 'Art and Fancy' to the 'barren Province' which Nahum Tate identified in his introduction to the 1689 translation of the *Plantarum*.[10] However, via the Horatian claim for the vatic status of lyric poetry, the flowers' voices demand scrutiny as metaphorical, allegorical and prophetic poetic utterance.[11] Moreover, Sprat's emphasis on the debt to the hexameter *Satires* and *Epistles* (cited in the epigraph above) deserves further investigation.

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[8] Maddison 1960: 39-141; Moul 2012: 90; Ijsewijn and Sacré 1998: 87-88; Revard 2014; Moul 2015b. Intertextuality within the corpus of neo-Latin literature remains understudied relative to engagement with classical authors: see however (on the British reception of Sarbiewski) Fordoński and Urbański (2010).
[9] Modern discussions of neo-Latin didactic are typically confined to hexameter and elegiac verse: thus Haskell 2014; and Schaffenrath 2015, who treats didactic as a sub-genre of narrative poetry.
[10] Above, p. 32. For modern distaste for the factual content of the *Plantarum*, see Bradner 1940: 120; P. Davis 2008: 35.
[11] On Horace as *vates*, see e.g. Commager 1995: 16-20.

In writing of the 'familiar easiness' of the Horatian works, Sprat seems to allude to the lively, quasi-dramatic tone of many of the inset odes. But, with their many voices and their different viewpoints, books 3-4 also recall the *Satires* and *Epistles* in their variety of argument and their philosophical eclecticism.[12] These two Horatian features, the claim for the vatic status of poetry and the combination of philosophical content with conversational tone, provide the structure for *Plantarum* 3-4 and lend the books an inner seriousness of purpose belied by their florid exterior.

2.1 Which Horace?

> There are, and always have been, many Horaces, not one Horace.
>
> Charles Martindale.[13]

To the educated seventeenth-century Englishman, Horace was a very familiar voice. His poetry was taught in the upper forms of the great public schools; Richard Tottel's 1557 *Songs and Sonnets* contains the first published English translations, closely followed by Thomas Drant in his *Medicinable Morall* (1566).[14] From 1621, translations of Horace were appearing regularly.[15] By the middle of the century, Horatian inflections abound both in published poetry and manuscript verse and commonplace books.[16] Scholarship by, among others, Colin Burrow, Victoria Moul and Joanna Martindale has shown how, from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, Horace was seen as a moral authority who provided means with which to explore political and artistic freedom and the poet's relationship with his patron, a bold assertion of poetry's power to immortalise its subject, a celebration of male friendship, and praise of rural retirement.[17]

Cowley's Horatianism is strongly inflected by Ben Jonson, and combines panegyric with meditation on government in a manner which reflects Jonsonian concerns with 'a particular relation between poet, monarch and society, for which Horace was the appropriate pattern.'[18] This Jonsonian engagement is reinforced by the intertextual relationship with *Chloridia*. As Victoria Moul and Joanna Martindale have shown, Jonson drew from Horace an insistence on the value of satire and of the importance of poetic freedom of speech, together with more general claims for the moral seriousness of poetry and the importance of art.[19] Moreover, Moul has shown how engagement with Horatian lyric enabled Jonson to nuance and inflect his panegyric. In Jonson's hands, the Horatian and Pindaric discourse of the victory ode is deployed to expose ambiguities which are then opposed to the

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[12] Mayer 1986: 64-65; Moles 2007: 165-180.
[13] Martindale and Hopkins 1993: 1.
[14] Tottel 1557; Drant 1566.
[15] Moul 2015c: 539; I. Green 2009: 226-38; Scodel 2010: 212-220.
[16] Money 2007: 318-319.
[17] Burrow 1993; J. Martindale 1993; Moul 2010: 9-11; Moul 2015c.
[18] Erskine-Hill 1983: 170.
[19] J. Martindale 1993: 58-59; Moul 2010: 3.

immortalising power of the poet.[20] She has extended this approach to the Horatian odes in *Plantarum* 3 and 4, highlighting the application of Horatian language of panegyric and triumphalism to plants whose victories are medicinal and who, in contrast to the subjects of Horace's political praise, are diminutive, ephemeral and often female.[21] Moul argues that this striking re-appropriation of Horatian discourse functions as a means of reinforcing the didactic function of the work. However, the very different context in which this language is used inevitably recalls its original, political, application. When Cowley's Lily compares herself to a swan raising its head above the waters of the Trent or Thames (*Plantarum* 4.658-60), she gestures towards Jonson's use of the swan as an image of the poet, and ultimately towards Horace's use of the same image for Pindar in *Odes* 4.2.[22] This contextual juxtaposition, and the concomitant evocation of the public or laureate poets Horace, Pindar and Jonson, prove a back-handed means of re-introducing the political and indeed claiming an equivalent public status for Cowley himself. Tiny female flowers are by no means excluded from political discourse.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Horace's public poetry was to play an important role in shaping Caroline panegyric.[23] A representative example is the *Irenodia Cantabrigiensis,* a collection of poems largely in Latin, but including Greek, Hebrew and Gaelic, published by the University of Cambridge to celebrate Charles I's return from Scotland in 1641.[24] Among many poems in elegiac metre, it includes a number of Latin lyrics in close imitation of Horace. Cowley's own contribution to the volume was a piece in elegiacs, whose praise of peace anticipates the opening of *Plantarum* 6:

> Ergo redis, multa frontem redimitus Oliva,
> Captivaeque ingens Laurea pacis adest.
> Vicerunt alii bellis & Marte cruento,
> Carole, Tu solus vincere bellum potes.
> Te sequitur mitis volucri Victoria penna,
> Et Famae pennas praevenit ipsa suae.

> And so you return, your forehead bound with abundant olive, and the great laurel of your captive, Peace, is here. Others have conquered with war and bloody Mars; Charles, you alone can conquer war. Gentle Victory follows you on swift wing, and she herself precedes the wings of her own Fame.
>
> *Irenodia Cantabrigiensis*, sig. B4^{v}, 1-6.

Horatian influence can also be seen in contemporary lyric. Moul and Martindale, following T. M. Greene, point out how the 'Jonsonian-Horatian' idiom consisted not in lexical

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[20] Moul 2010: 13-53. 'Even an unvictorious [...] public career becomes glorious in the hands of the poet' (on *Under-wood* 25); 'A victory ode in which the chief victor celebrated is [...] a (would-be) epic poet' (on *Uncollected Verse* 6); 'crafting from worldly defeat and disappointment a celebration of a different kind of 'victory'' (on *Under-wood* 70). Moul 2010: 40, 48, 53.
[21] See Moul 2012.
[22] Jonson, 'To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr William Shakespeare: And What He Hath Left Us', *Ungathered Verse*, 26; 'Ode Allegorike', *Ungathered Verse* 6 (Herford and Simpson 1925-52: vol. 8). On the swan in Jonson, Horace and Pindar, see Moul 2010: 40-48; on Horace and Pindar, see G. Davis 1991: 133-143.
[23] See e.g. Norbrook 1990: 149. On the university anthology, see Loxley 1997: 9-57, 68-71.
[24] *Irenodia Cantabrigiensis* 1641.

imitation or adaptation, but rather in the assimilation of classical ideas to wholly contemporary concerns.[25] Cowley's reworking at the opening of *Plantarum* 4 of the '*beatus vir*' trope from Horace's second *Epode* represents an articulation of the classical tension between country and city in a seventeenth-century context of active citizenship versus withdrawal or marginalisation. In the poetry of Cowley's contemporaries, Horatian themes of country life, the countryside and the symposium are frequently given a political cast. In Robert Herrick's 'Farewell Frost, or welcome the Spring' (*Hesperides* 642), the poet draws on the Horatian themes of seasonal change (eg *Odes* 2.10, 1.4, 4.7) to generate a political metaphor.[26] Similarly, Lovelace's 'The Grasshopper' uses the Horatian setting of the drinking-party as a means of enacting political resistance, while for Mildmay Fane the coming of spring becomes a time for renewed Royalist activity.[27]

Jonson and Horace come together in their appropriation by Royalist writers. David Norbrook has shown how works by Fane and by his fellow-Royalist Sir Richard Fanshawe generated a strong association of Horatianism with Royalism, via the deployment of Horace in support of Royalist ideology in Fanshawe's 1648 publication of his translation of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* with its supplementary material, as well as through the political coding in Fane's manuscript poems, 'Fugitive Poetry.'[28] At the same time, as James Loxley has argued, Ben Jonson's vigorous equation of poetic with political activity provided a way for Royalist writers to seek the *vita activa* in the literary pursuits of enforced retirement – an important theme to which I will return.[29] Sprat's insistence on the Horatianism of *Plantarum* 3-4 may well be motivated at least in part by the desire to emphasise Cowley's Royalist allegiance.

However, Parliamentarians could be Horatians too. The regicide and erstwhile friend of Mildmay Fane, Henry Marten, wrote a Latin epode which comprehensively inverted the argument of its classical model, beginning *Ignavus ille* in opposition to the *Beatus ille* of *Epode* 2.[30] Payne Fisher included an Horatian ode in praise of Cromwell in the 1652 publication of his *Irenodia Gratulatoria*, a hexameter poem celebrating the Protector's return from Ireland.[31] David Norbrook has contrasted the strong Royalist appropriation of Horatianism with the republican challenge presented by Marvell's 'Horatian Ode.'[32] In response to earlier readings of the poem which viewed Marvell's use of Horatian tropes as covertly undermining the work's status as Cromwellian panegyric, he argues that Marvell is

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[25] T. Greene 1982: 273-274; J. Martindale 1993: 67-68; Moul 2010: 4-5.
[26] See the discussion in J. Martindale 1993: 81-82.
[27] Lovelace: Miner 1971: 286-95; J. Martindale 1977: 272-277; Loxley 1997: 217-223. Fane: Norbrook 1999: 252-253.
[28] Norbrook 1999: 252-254.
[29] Loxley 1997: 214-5. Loxley illustrates his case with a passage from Marvell's 'Tom May's Death', in which Marvell imitates Jonson imitating Horace. See J. Martindale 1993: 50-52.
[30] Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, Marten-Loder Papers 78, fol. 4^{v}; cited by Norbrook 1999: 255. The dating of this poem is uncertain: Norbrook questions the date of 1653 given at C. Williams 1978: 118-138.
[31] Fisher 1652.
[32] Norbrook 1990; Norbrook 1999: 245-70. For discussion of the poem's Horatianism, see Moul 2015c: 548-551; N. Smith 2007 *ad loc*.

instead wresting these tropes from Royalist discourse, deploying them in support of the Protectorate, and figuring Cromwell as a new type of Horatian imperial hero.[33] Later, in 'The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector' (1654), Marvell was to contrast the Horatian ideal of steering a middle course (from the much-imitated *Odes* 2.10) with Cromwell's decisive action in steering back to sea ('The First Anniversary', 265-278).

After the Restoration, the 'lyric' Horace was to be increasingly identified in English vernacular poetry with a libertine Epicureanism which foregrounded the *carpe diem* philosophy of some of the symposiastic odes, and it was the *Satires* and *Epistles* that provided the main models for the 'Augustan' poets.[34] For the poets of the mid-seventeenth century, however, Horace's moral seriousness was a given, and was regarded as no less intrinsic to the lyric than to the hexameter verse.[35] This unified vision of Horace's *oeuvre* is central to appreciating the Horatian inflection of *Plantarum* 3-4, where the lyric forms combine with political-philosophical discussion to generate an effect which a modern reader may find incongruous, but which sits much more comfortably within the seventeenth-century Horatian idiom. Formally, too, Cowley's combination of lyric verse and political ideas with a tone that is often conversational (and frequently humorous) is in keeping with an Early Modern sensitivity to the Horatian blend of styles.[36]

2.2 Chertsey, the Sabine Farm, and the Garden of Epicurus

> Certain gardens are described as retreats when they are really attacks.
> Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'Unconnected Sentences of Gardening'.[37]

Flora's court on the banks of the Thames represents not an Epicurean garden of *otium* but rather a Stoic space in which the distractions of city life are removed in order better to engage in a *vita activa* consisting of *negotium animi* and in which daily human intercourse is replaced with 'the conversation of the whole world.'[38] This reading of *Plantarum* 3-4, with its emphasis on a Jonsonian vision of the poet's public role which derives ultimately from Horace, complicates the existing current of scholarship which sees in Cowley's works of the 1660s an explicit rejection of public life and a withdrawal, whether voluntary or *faute de mieux*, to rural solitude and obscurity. In the light of recent studies of literature of the Interregnum which point out the ambiguity and disingenuousness of the retirement stance, the political content of *Plantarum* 3-4 can be seen to complicate the traditional view of Cowley's retirement, showing, at the very least, his continued interest in and engagement with contemporary events.

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[33] See e.g. Norbrook 1999: 268-269; Norbrook 1990: 162-164.
[34] Erskine-Hill 1983: 172; J. Martindale 1993: 53-54, 72, 74.
[35] Moul 2015c: 544-545.
[36] J. Martindale 1993: 75.
[37] Abrioux 1992.
[38] Lodge 1620: 4.4.

Discussion of Cowley's treatment of country and city must begin with Horace. The important twentieth-century studies of Maren-Sofie Røstvig and Earl Miner emphasised the importance to seventeenth-century writers of the Horace of rural simplicity and Horace the symposiast, identifying a preoccupation with the 'good life' and the 'happy man.'[39] For Miner in 1971, the Horatian retirement pose entailed an eclectic embrace of Stoicism and Epicureanism, 'a self-sufficiency involving self-knowledge and wisdom, living a life relying on oneself, and refusing to be distracted by the baubles of the world.'[40] Moreover, both argued, influentially, that when retreat became a necessity in the 1650s, cavalier poets were able to exploit the Horatian trope to depict their withdrawal from the world as a turn both to the simple life of the country and to philosophical study.[41] Modern scholarship on Cowley, too, has focused on his engagement with the Horace of the Sabine Farm and of rural retreat, figuring the much-publicised retirement of the 1660s in terms of an explicitly neo-Horatian withdrawal.[42]

For Røstvig and Miner, seventeenth-century Horatianism was largely devoid of the ironies which modulate the praise of country life in Horace and Virgil.[43] It should also be noted that, however fulsome Horace's praise of his Sabine Farm, his poetry remains divided between country and city: he may inspire poetry of retirement, but it would be entirely wrong to call him a retirement poet.[44] More recent scholarship, however, has detected these ironies and ambivalences in Early Modern poetry, notably in Jonson's country-house poems, which are complicated by the awareness of the tension between praise of a patron and artistic freedom.[45] Fanshawe's 'Ode on the Proclamation of 1630', published in 1648 with the reissue of the *Il Pastor Fido* translation, has been the subject of a revisionist reading by Syrithe Pugh, who traces the poem's Horatian and Virgilian allusions to rural retirement and the Golden Age to argue that the work expresses a veiled protest at the gentry's exclusion from the public life of the city.[46]

With the reappraisal of the political content of Cavalier poetry has come the recognition that retreat to the country and the symposiastic community of the drinking-party could represent a form of Royalist resistance.[47] James Loxley has shown how retirement could represent a continuing 'war of the pen', demonstrating the close engagement with contemporary issues which characterises Fanshawe's *Il Pastor Fido* volume and Mildmay

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[39] Røstvig 1962; Miner 1971. The *loci classici* are Horace's second *Epode* and Virgil, *Georgics* 2.458-540.
[40] Miner 1971: 90. See also Røstvig: 1962: 121.
[41] Miner 1971: 87, 179. See also Anselment 1988: 16; Marcus 1989: 214; D. Smith 2002: 285-286.
[42] Nethercot's chapter on the Chertsey period is titled 'The Sabine Farm' (Nethercot 1931: 244-254). Scholars identifying an Horatian inflection in the Essays include Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, Joanna Martindale and Kathryn King (Scott-Baumann 2013: 88; J. Martindale 1977: 331; King 2003: 48).
[43] For a representative survey of the vast literature on the ambiguities in Virgil's portrayal of country life, see Perkell 2002: 3-39. On Horace's treatment of the theme, see S. Harrison 2007: 235-247.
[44] S. Harrison 2007: 235-238.
[45] Moul 2010: 122-131.
[46] Pugh 2010: 107-119.
[47] Loxley 1997: 215-223; Norbrook 1999: 252-254.

Fane's *Otia Sacra* (also 1648) – works which both claim to be the product of enforced leisure.[48] Similarly, Andrew Shifflett has challenged the binary oppositions of country and city, *otium* and *negotium*, showing that retirement could in itself represent a mode of engagement, a retreat from the day-to-day *negotium* of the city only to enable full participation in the intellectual 'conversation of the whole world.'[49] Particularly important for the study of Cowley's late works is Shifflett's identification of 'the paradoxical and political nature of virtually all claims to individual constancy, retirement, and silence in the face of political change and competition in the seventeenth century'.[50]

Pugh's work on Royalist poetry has shown how the countryside could become a locus for the expression of political allegiances. In her study of the use of classical intertexts in Herrick and Fanshawe, she draws attention to Herrick's use of Ovid's exile poetry to figure his rural Devon parish both as a place of exile and as a poetic realm in which absolute monarchy still reigns unchallenged.[51] Looking closely at the relationship of Fanshawe's poetry with Ovid and Virgil, she argues that Fanshawe uses the classical texts as a means of articulating an agenda of constitutional Royalism beneath a surface of unquestioning loyalty.[52] Despite Fanshawe's close engagement with Horace in the *Il Pastor Fido* volume, Pugh does not address this relationship in detail. However, when we come to look more closely at the Horatianism of *Plantarum* 3-4, we shall see how fruitful Pugh's methodology is in exploring Cowley's use of Horace, where intertextual engagement performs a similar political function.

This realisation of the complexities of the retirement stance is paralleled by scholarship which helps to destabilise the conventional view that Cowley's *Essays* represent a template for the life of the country squire.[53] David Hopkins has argued that a clear-sighted self-scrutiny and seriousness of intent underlies the whimsical surface of his Horatian fable of the town mouse and the country mouse, in which Cowley weighs up the competing and genuine attractions of city and country life.[54] Paul Davis' study of Cowley's translations from classical authors shows how the poet excises potentially troubling passages from his originals, while relying on his reader's familiarity with the Latin text to enable their contents to be implicitly expressed.[55] Such readings destabilise the apparently stark moral opposition between town and country of the *Essays* and their exhortation to solitude and obscurity. Rather than standing in opposition to the *Essays*, then, the political content of *Plantarum* 3-4

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[48] Loxley 1997: 192-234.
[49] Shifflett 1998: 5. 'The conversation of the whole world': Lodge (1620).
[50] Shifflett 1998: 107.
[51] Pugh 2010: 7.
[52] Pugh 2010: 8-9. See especially the discussion of Fanshawe's 'Ode on the Proclamation of 1630', 107-119.
[53] For this view, see Low 1985: 126-129; Parry 1992: 144-145; Radcliffe 1988: 800-802.
[54] Hopkins 1993; see esp. 125-126. The fable of the town mouse and the country mouse is found in *Verses, Written on Several Occasions* (Cowley 1663) and was reprinted as part of 'Of Agriculture' (*Essays*).
[55] P. Davis 2008: 93-109.

forms part of a vision of rural retirement which can encompass and engage with the preoccupations of the city. The riparian setting of Flora's court forms a theatre in which questions of government and state may be rehearsed.

At the opening of *Plantarum* 4, Cowley sets out a manifesto for rural retirement. He begins with an expression of the conventional desire for self-sufficiency and obscurity:

> Foelix, quem miserâ procul ambitione remotum,
> Parvus Ager placidè, parvus & Hortus, alit.
> Praebet *Ager* quicquid frugi *Natura* requirit,
> *Hortus* habet quicquid *luxuriosa* petit,
> Caetera sollicitae speciosa incommoda Vitae,
> Permittit *Stultis* quaerere, habere *Malis*.
>
> Blest be the man (and blest he is) whom'ere
> (Plac'd far out of the roads of Hope or Fear)
> A little Field, and little Garden feeds;
> The Field gives all that Frugal Nature needs,
> The wealthy Garden liberally bestows
> All she can ask, when she luxurious grows.
> The specious inconveniences that wait
> Upon a life of Business, and of State,
> He sees (nor does the sight disturb his rest)
> By Fools desired, by wicked men possest.
>
> *Plantarum* 4.1-6.
> Translation: Abraham Cowley, from 'Of Agriculture.'

Alluding to Virgil's Old Man of Corycia (*Georgics* 4.125-148) and to the stories of Abdolonimus, summoned from his farm to rule Sidon, and Aglaus, the Arcadian farmer more fortunate than Gyges, he praises the retired country life.[56] By privileging rural retirement over political and military activity, Cowley was able implicitly to present the end of his own political career as a voluntary, even enthusiastic, retirement, the personal reference made even stronger when he included a translation of the passage in 'Of Agriculture.'[57] The passage closes with a prayer that such a life may be granted him in his declining years:

> Talis, magne Deus (si te mihi dicere fas sit
> Ridiculorum inter nomina vana Deûm)
> Talis, Vere Deus, nunc inclinantibus annis
> Sit, precor, aetatis Scena suprema meae,
> Finis inutilium mihi sit precor illa laborum,
> Iactatae statio firma sit illa rati.
> Sic mea coelestem praegustet Vita quietem;
> Dormiat, & Mortem discat amare suam.
>
> So, gracious God, (if it may lawful be,)
> Among those foolish Gods to mention Thee)
> So let me act on such a private stage,
> The last dull Scenes of my declining Age;

[56] For Abdolonimus, see Curtius Rufus 4.1; Aglaus, Pliny, *NH* 7.47, Valerius Maximus 7.1.2.
[57] From *Essays*.

After long toiles and Voyages in vain,
This quiet Port let my tost Vessel gain,
Of Heavenly rest, this Earnest to me lend,
Let my Life sleep, and learn to love her End.

Plantarum 4.41-48.
Translation: Abraham Cowley, from 'Of Agriculture'.[58]

As a manifesto for the retired life, however, the passage is not straightforward. Like Horace's *Epode* 2, with its closing picture of Alfius the money-lender resuming his commercial activity, it ends with an abrupt change of direction:

Ecce iterum abripior longè; quo *Musa* rapis me?
Otii laudatrix irrequieta sacri?
Pulchra via est (fateor) sed nostris devia coeptis,
Verte aliò, inceptum perficiamus iter.

But look! Again I am snatched far off course; where, Muse, do you carry me, restlessly praising sacred leisure? The path is a beautiful one (I confess it), but far astray from the undertaking I began. Turn elsewhere, let us finish the journey we started.

Plantarum 4.49-52. [59]

The longing for obscurity is presented as a digression, and one whose allure dangerously distracts him from the job at hand, the narrative of Flora's contest. Moreover, the passage is expressed as a prayer: this is how the poet wishes to end his life, once his labours are finished and his ship reaches harbour (45-46). It is not the life he is currently living.[60] Finally, this opening to book 4 mirrors the close of book 3, the digression on the Wars of the Roses which itself ended with *Quo me, Musa, rapis?* (3.1116). Violence and obscurity are presented as two extremes which divert the poet from the *inceptum iter*, which is implicitly depicted as the *via media* between the two.

The rural setting and horticultural *dramatis personae* of *Plantarum* 3-4 are thus presented as something other than the fruits of a Cavalier inward turn.[61] Like Fane's 1648 volume, the *otium sacrum* of *Plantarum* 3-4 is not the retreat from the outside world outlined in lines 1-48, but rather an opportunity to consider that world from a position of rural tranquillity.[62] I noted above (p. 110) how the books are framed by political reference: to the Restoration and Henrietta Maria at the beginning, and to constitutional change at the end. Moreover, other poetry of the period shows how readily the garden of retirement itself could be politicised. Fanshawe describes the 'Common-wealth of Flowres' thus:

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[58] *Poemata Latina* reads *Montem*, corrected in the 1678 edition to *mortem*.
[59] Paul Davis writes perceptively of the way in which Cowley's translation of *Epode* 2 succeeds in evoking the presence of Alfius despite the omission of the poem's final lines. P. Davis 2008: 106-109.
[60] Cowley's early death in 1667 at the age of 49 tends to obscure the fact that, at the time of writing, he could have had no suspicion that the *suprema Scaena* was rapidly approaching.
[61] Jane Darcy describes Cowley's retirement as 'begrudged exile' (Darcy 2013: 29). For the association between Royalist retreat and the garden, see Anselment 1988: 13-16; Marcus 1989: 213-233; D. Smith 2002: 259-289. James Loxley critiques 'the long-held belief that, their cause overrun, cavaliers laid down their arms, pulled up the drawbridge and withdrew into a neo-stoic or epicurean horticulture of the mind' (Loxley 1997: 201).
[62] On Fane: 'A poetry of negotium emerges from a framework which claims to embody its opposite' (Loxley 1997: 228).

The Lillie (Queene) the (Royall) Rose,
The Gillyflowre (Prince of the bloud)
The (Courtyer) Tulip (gay in clothes)
The (Regall) Budd

The Vilet (purple Senatour)
How they doe mock the pompe of State,
And all that at the surly doore
Of great ones waite.

Richard Fanshawe, 'Ode on the Proclamation', 118-128.[63]

Marvell, famously, laces his description of Fairfax's country retreat with military imagery, generating a dizzying confusion of metaphor in which war and peace, country and city, *otium* and *negotium* become inseparable.[64]

For Cowley, as for Fanshawe and Marvell, the countryside of *Plantarum* 3-4 is both antithetical and intrinsic to the business of statecraft. Early in book 3 Cowley insists on the importance to the restored monarch of the woods and gardens (*Plantarum* 3.69); when Flora declares a republic at the end of the book, the contemporary allusion is sharpened by the appointment as consuls of the Rose and the Lily, emblems respectively of England (Charles I) and France (Henrietta Maria).[65] To this extent, then, the distinction between country and city is elided, with Cowley's countryside becoming both a metaphor for the state and a literal political theatre.

2.3 Stoic or Epicurean?

On such a reading, Cowley's countryside represents a neo-Stoic space for contemplation of the outside world rather than an Epicurean one from which it is excluded. Thomas Sprat, however, was in no doubt that Cowley's retirement to Barnelmes and then Chertsey represented an Epicurean retirement, a turn to study and the companionship of a few choice friends (above, pp. 37-8).

Paul Davis and Jane Darcy have both shown the extent to which the *De Vita* and the English *Account* were driven by Sprat's self-interested desire to manage Cowley's posthumous reputation, both to deflect questions of the poet's loyalty and to dissociate both himself and Cowley from the disreputable circle of Buckingham and Rochester.[66] This desire becomes even clearer when one compares the Latin passage above with its equivalent in the *Account*,

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[63] Text from Davidson 1997. Note how Fanshawe imposes a Roman colouring onto the contemporary setting of his poem with the 'Senatour' and the allusion to Roman clientele (cf. Epodes 2.7-8, forumque vitat et superba civium/potentiorum limina; Virgil, *Georgics* 2.461-2, *si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis/mane salutantum totis vomit aedibus undam*). Other examples include Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' 329-44 ('Tulips, in several colours barr'd/ Were then the Switzers of our guard'), on which see the discussion in Marcus 1989: 48-52, and Herrick's 'The Parliament of Roses to Julia' (*Hesperides* 11). The most celebrated analogy of garden and state occurs in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (Act 3, Sc. 4).

[64] 'The identity of war and peace, retirement and violence, has seldom been so strong in a work of humane literature', Shifflett 1998: 52. See further 44-52.

[65] See e.g. Britland 2006: 18.

[66] For Sprat's management of Cowley's reputation, see P. Davis 2008: 110-111; Darcy 2013: 26-39.

where the emphasis on Cowley's determination to dedicate himself to scholarship in the face of urgent demands for him to resume public service echoes the story of Abdolonimus (above, p. 120) and may well be directed at an Anglophone readership likely to question the motivation for retirement:

> And immediately he gave over all pursuit of Honour and Riches, in a time, when, if any ambitious or covetous thoughts had remain'd in his mind, he might justly have expected to have them readily satisfied. In his last seven or eight years he was conceal'd in his beloved obscurity, and possess'd that Solitude, which from his very childhood he had always most passionately desired. Though he had frequent invitations to return into business, yet he never gave ear to any perswasions of Profit or Preferment. His visits to the City and Court were very few: his stays in Town were only as a Passenger, not an Inhabitant. The Places that he chose for the Seats of his declining life, were two or three Villages on the Bank of the *Thames.* During this recess his mind was rather exercised on what was to come, than what was pass'd; he suffer'd no more business, nor cares of life to come neer him, than what were enough to keep his Soul awake, but not to disturb it. Some few Friends and Books, a cheerful heart, and innocent conscience, were his constant Companions. His Poetry indeed he took with him, but he made that an Anchorite, as well as himself: he only dedicated it to the service of his Maker, to describe the great images of Religion and Virtue wherewith his mind abounded.
>
> Sprat, *Life*, sig. b2^{r}.

Cowley's friend John Evelyn, too, cast the poet's life at Chertsey in terms of Epicurean retreat. In a letter of March 12, 1667, Evelyn apologises for his own recent praise of the life of *negotium*:

> You had reason to be astonish'd at the presumption, not to name it affront; that I, who have so highly celebrated Recesse, and envied it in others, should become an Advocate for the Enemie, which of all others it abhors and flies from: I conjure you to believe that I am still of the same mind, and that there is no Person alive, who does more honor and breath after the life and repose you so happily cultivate, and adorne by Your Example.
>
> Evelyn, *Epistles* CCLXXXV.[67]

Evelyn shamefacedly admits that he has failed to uphold the principles of withdrawal from the world which Cowley so triumphantly exemplifies. But there is an agenda here too: Evelyn's letter is an attempt to persuade Cowley to write an Ode to preface Sprat's *History of the Royal Society.* Enticing the poet from a putative garden of Epicurean *otium* is perhaps a more alluring and graceful mode of persuasion than an appeal to dour Stoic constancy.

In the seventeenth century, Stoicism and Epicureanism were both compatible with retirement, but, as Andrew Shifflett has shown, there was a fundamental difference between them. While both schools sought contentment through indifference to the world, the Epicurean achieved that indifference through withdrawal, the Stoic through inner strength, or *constantia*. Hence the Epicurean garden was a place of *otium* and retreat; the Stoic one a locus for *negotium animi*, an intellectual engagement that could satisfactorily take the place of physical engagement.[68] Viewed through a Protestant lens, the Stoic garden provided a locus in which withdrawal from the world created a space for continued spiritual and ethical struggle, the pursuit of the *vita activa* rather than a retreat to the cloister.[69] Equally, both

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[67] Chambers and Galbraith 2014: vol. 1, 434-437. See also Small and Small 1997: 212-213.
[68] Shifflett 1998: 57-58.
[69] Norbrook 1990: 82-93; Loxley 1997: 202-203.

Stoicism and Epicureanism formed part of seventeenth-century ideas of Horatianism.[70] The philosophical eclecticism, which Horace himself recognises and gently mocks, provided Early Modern English writers with an opportunity to explore a wide range of ethical and ideological positions.[71] Both the Stoic *constantia* of the widely-imitated *Odes* 2.10 and the Epicurean *carpe diem* theme provided powerful models for Early Modern poets.[72] Moreover, as David Hopkins has shown, Cowley's figuration of the oppositions of town and country in his version of the fable of the two mice reveals an awareness of the tension between different philosophical positions which Horace explores in *Satires* 2.6.[73]

The hymn to the retired life that opens book 4 is given an Epicurean flavour with its praise of country life and its rejection of ambition and material anxiety. However, as observed above (p. 121), its framing and expression undermine its status as a credo. Cowley's fruitless work and storm-tossed ship (45-47) represented his current situation: the Epicurean withdrawal of lines 1-4 is reserved for his final moments, as he prepares for death (48).

Elsewhere, we find both Stoicism and Epicureanism treated more light-heartedly. The diabolic mole which digs up Flora's garden (4.622-643) is an *Epicuraeus porcus* – surely an allusion to Horace's description of himself as *Epicuri de grege porcum* at *Epistles* 1.4.16.[74] Winter is a Stoic season (*tempestas Stoica*, 168); Violet boasts of having cured Epicurus of fever (3.518). Poppy's hymn to sleep echoes the untroubled repose which is a feature of Virgil and Horace's praise of country life.[75] And Anemone and Tulip, with their emphasis on physical beauty and – in the case of Tulip – sensual pleasure, embody the libertine Epicureanism of Saint-Evremond which was to prove so influential in the Restoration court.[76] Anemone's case rests solely on her beauty:

> Quas vires habeam fortè requiritis?
> Quas vires habeam? *Formam* habeo *bonam*,
> Pulchrae filia *Divae*,
> Pulchri filia *Adonidis*.
>
> What powers do I have, perhaps you ask? What powers do I have? I have a lovely face, as I am the daughter of a beautiful goddess, and daughter of beautiful Adonis.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.669-672.[77]

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[70] Miner identified a 'Christianized Horace, or [...] a Horatianized Christianity' in Cavalier poetry. (Miner 1971: 89).
[71] See Moles 2007: 165-180; Miner 1971: 88-92.
[72] J. Martindale 1977: 245-258.
[73] For the tension between engagement and withdrawal in *Satires* 2.6, see also Hopkins 1993: 113-119.
[74] On this passage, see McCarter 2015: 98-99.
[75] *Secura quies*, *Georgics* 2.467; *nec levis somnos timor aut cupido/sordidus aufert* (*Odes* 2.16.15-16); *somnus agrestium/lenis virorum non humilis domos/fastidit* (Odes 3.1.21-32).
[76] Nethercot 1931: 227-9.
[77] Anemone's case is gently undermined by the echo of Horace, *Odes* 1.16 (*O matre pulchra filia pulchrior*), with its 'ironic and amused' sermon on anger (Mayer 1994: 148).

As well as her splendid dress, Tulip cites her powers as an aphrodisiac, with an allusion to the rape of Lucretia which grates considerably on modern sensibilities: had Lucretia partaken of the tulip bulb, Tarquinius would have found her a willing partner (3.797-804).[78]

The diversity of voices in books 3 and 4 echoes the multiple strands of Horace's *Epistles*, and likewise provides a genuine ethical and ideological debate. It is this philosophical content, and above all its political application, that makes Flora's court ultimately one of *negotium animi*, with the withdrawal from the world providing a space for the discussion of competing ideas of kingship. The establishment of a republic in the closing lines of the book serves as a reminder of the contest's seriousness of purpose. As Shifflett remarks with reference to Lipsius' *De Constantia*, 'the garden is less important as a pleasant place than as an opportunity for literary and intellectual performance [...] not only an occasion for reading and writing but a figure for rhetorical contestation in general.'[79]

3 *Plantarum* 3-4 and Caroline Masque

The *negotium animi* of *Plantarum* 3-4 is informed by its Horatian intertext, both in terms of the expression of different ideological and philosophical schools of thought deriving from the *Epistles*, and in the Horatian lyric odes in which many of its arguments are expressed. It is also informed by its dramatic structuring, as a sequence of speeches and vignettes with a specific and carefully-realised setting and a single coherent narrative. This dramatic structure, the garden setting, the centrality of Flora and the personified flowers all point towards the genre of masque, and specifically to Jonson's *Chloridia*, a celebration of chaste neo-Platonic love and fertility structured around the stellification of Chloris as the goddess Flora.[80]

Caroline masque might at first sight seem an unlikely intertext for a poet writing in the early years of the Restoration. These highly mannered and visually spectacular occasional pieces, set firmly in the context of their production and associated emphatically with the Jacobean and Caroline courts that commissioned them, initially appear to have little place in

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[78] The tulip was not generally regarded as aphrodisiac. Cowley's footnote states: *Lauremb. Gerardus, et Parkinsonus, Contendunt, &, ut arbitror, evincunt, Tulipam nostram non aliam esse Satyrio* Dioscoridis*, inter venerios bulbos olim famosissimo* ('Laurembergius, Gerard and Parkinson maintain and, I think, demonstrate, that our Tulip is none other than the Satyrion of Dioscorides, once most famous among aphrodisiac bulbs', note 14, on 3.790), but this is disingenuous. Parkinson's note actually reads: 'I have made trial of them my self in this manner. I have preserved the roots of these Tulipas in Sugar, [...] and have found them to be almost as pleasant as the Eringus roots, [...] but for force of Venereous qualitie, I cannot say, either from my self, not having eaten many, or from any other, on whom I have bestowed them.' Parkinson 1629: 67. The rape of Lucretia was appropriated by Early Modern writers as cautionary tale against tyranny: see van Es 2015: 442-447.

[79] Shifflett 1998: 61.

[80] Garden settings include *The Maske of Flowers* (1614), *Tempe Restored* (1632; Lindley 1995), *The Temple of Love* (1635; Jones and Davenant 1643), *Luminalia* (1637/8; Davenant 1638). See Orgel and Strong 1973, vol. 2: 484-485, 510, 515, 518-519, 562, 608-609, 656, 797. On *Chloridia* see Veevers 127-130; Britland 2006: 74-89. On *Chloridia*'s identification of Henrietta Maria with the coming of spring, see Tigner 2012: 192-193.

the pragmatic – and financially constrained – atmosphere of Charles II's London.[81] However, in the wake of scholarship that has rescued court masque from its traditional depiction as an essentially inward-looking form encapsulating the enclosed world of the court, has come a more considered approach to the various ways in which the genre survived the Civil War, not just in Restoration opera but in tragi-comedy and the rhymed heroic play. Lois Potter's work on literature of the Civil Wars and Interregnum has demonstrated how the closely related genres of romance and pastoral functioned during the Civil Wars and Interregnum as a locus for Royalist allegory and steganographic writing.[82] Generic affinities between masque and Restoration tragicomedy and rhymed heroic play have been highlighted by the work of Nancy Klein Maguire, who draws attention to the use of the bipartite masque-antimasque structure in 'divided tragicomedy', with its 'upper and lower plots.'[83] The use of the language of masque in the literary discourse of the Restoration has been emphasised by Lauren Shohet's study of the closet drama of Anthony Sadler's *The Subjects' Joy* (1660) and of the staged works of Davenant, Crowne's *Calisto* (1675) and Dryden's *Albion and Albanius*.[84] Shohet and Maguire highlight the extent to which the discourse of masque is used by Restoration writers as they attempt to construct a narrative of the recent past and to articulate the changed nature of Carolean kingship.[85] In *Plantarum* 3-4, Cowley engages with Caroline masque, above all through its close associations with the court, to focus his reflections on the monarchy of the 1660s.

Chloridia and its companion-piece *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* were the last masques which Jonson wrote in partnership with Inigo Jones. *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, written for the king and performed on 9 January 1631, depicted the invasion of Callipolis, an allegorical representation of London, by depraved lovers, costumed as citizens of 'the four prime *European* Nations.'[86] Charles, representing Heroic Love, successfully banishes the invaders, and the masque concludes with the chaste neo-Platonic union of king and queen, symbolised by a palm tree surmounted by an imperial crown and intertwined with the rose of England and the lily of France.[87] *Chloridia* was performed on 22 February, with the role of Chloris danced by the queen. Set in a garden, it tells the story of the nymph Chloris, transformed into the goddess Flora upon her marriage to Zephyrus, a story deriving

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[81] For the traditional view of masque, see e.g. Wedgwood 1960. Orgel and Strong, with their focus on allegory and iconography, paved the way for a more considered approach to masque: Orgel and Strong 1973. Later treatments of the genre include Sharpe 1987; Mulryne and Shewring 1993; Butler 2008; Britland 2006. David Lindley argued that masque did not survive the Civil War: 'Though the description 'Masque' survives in the later seventeenth century, it is applied very randomly to entertainments whose connection with the earlier genre is at the level of theatrical ingenuity and splendour, of an operatic musical style [...] and of the employment of classical myth' (Lindley 1984: 7).
[82] Potter 1989: 72-112.
[83] Maguire 1992: 83-93; Altieri 1986: 127-128.
[84] Shohet 2010: 189-193; 226-235. On *Albion and Albanius*, see also Hammond 1984: 169-183.
[85] On the 'representational crisis' of the early Restoration, see MacLean 1990: 259-260; Sawday 1992: 170-173; Hammond 2006: xiii-xvi.
[86] *Chloridia* 32-33.
[87] Text: Herford and Simpson 1925-53: vol. 7. Discussion of *Callipolis* can be found in Butler 2008: 289-294 and Britland 2006: 66-70.

ultimately from Ovid.[88] Antimasquers depicting Jealousy, Disdain, Fear and Dissimulation, a prince of hell, tempests, lightning, thunder, rain and snow are dispelled by Juno, and Chloris is revealed in her golden bower. Iris enters, announcing that the rebellious Cupid sues for pardon; Fame appears standing on a globe and accompanied by Poesy, History, Architecture, and Sculpture; and the masque ends with a song in praise of Chloris.[89] Erica Veevers has discussed the relationship of *Chloridia* to the neo-Platonic programme of Botticelli's *Primavera*, itself based on Flora's story from the *Fasti,* arguing that both share an upward movement from the earthly to the spiritual which pivots on the central figure of Venus/Flora/queen as a figure of moderation and harmony.[90]

Chloridia has immediate resonances with *Plantarum* 3-4 through the centrality of Chloris/Flora and springtime garden setting; Flora's authority over the flowers is enacted in her role as arbiter of the contest. There are also more general links with the masque genre. When Cowley explains that the flowers who attend are Platonic essences, as opposed to actual plants (3.91-44), he immediately activates the association of Henrietta Maria and her circle with a particular brand of French neo-Platonism. Once derided as 'facile', Caroline neo-Platonism is now considered to supply an important vehicle for the self-representation of the monarchy, notably the perfect, chaste and fertile union of Charles and Henrietta.[91] Central to the neo-Platonism of the court was the idea of a Divine Beauty, personified by the queen and complemented by the Heroic Virtue of the king. When combined, these formed a nexus of virtue, spirituality, fertility, chastity and harmony capable of vanquishing the earthly qualities of lust and greed and of restoring order to chaos.[92] With its emphasis on the civilising and spiritualising power of the feminine, Caroline neo-Platonism gave Henrietta a legitimate role as her husband's helpmeet and counsellor, directly confronting the anxieties as to the influence of the monarch's consort that I noted in chapter 1 (p. 99).[93] This role is mirrored in Flora's court of *Plantarum* 3-4, where harmony is restored among competing plants who put forward claims which are often expressed in neo-Platonic terms of peace, beauty and healing.[94]

Plantarum 3 and 4 evoke a performance which, like *Chloridia*, centres on the queen

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[88] *Fasti* 5.183-354. Jonson quotes Ovid's line giving Flora authority over the flowers: *Fasti* 5.213; *Chloridia* 7. References to *Chloridia* are taken from Lindley 1995.
[89] See Britland 2006: 74-89; Veevers 1989: 127-130.
[90] Veevers 1989: 128.
[91] 'Facile platonism': Parry 1981: 189. On Caroline neo-Platonism see further Parry 1981: 184-197; Veevers 1989: 14-21.
[92] As well as *Chloridia*, neo-Platonic themes are found in other theatrical productions sponsored by Charles and Henrietta: *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* (1631; Herford and Simpson vol. 7), *Albion's Triumph* (1632; Orgel and Strong 1973, vol. 2), *Tempe Restored* (1632), *The Shepherds' Paradise* (1632/3; Montagu 1659), *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1634; Fredson Bowers 1966-1997, vol. 3), *The Temple of Love* (1635), *Florimène* (1636), *Luminalia* (1638) and *Salmacida Spolia* (1640; Lindley 1995). On neo-Platonism in Caroline masque, see Orgel and Strong: 1973: 54-57; Veevers 1989: 1-11, 14-23; Britland 2006: 6-13; Butler 2008: 147-148. For discussion of the neo-Platonism of individual masques and theatrical entertainments, see Veevers 1989: 110-149; Britland 2006: 125-128, 132-139, 142-144, 150-154, 168-171, 188-91; Butler 2008: 290-298; Parry 1981: 184-197.
[93] Butler 2008: 147-148.
[94] Butler 2008: 146-152.

in her guise as Chloris/Flora, and as such recall the series of masques presented by Henrietta Maria to her husband.[95] Reinforcing this sense of performance is the setting, which is described in terms strongly evocative of the elaborate scenery of masque. *Chloridia* is set on a stage surrounded by ornamentation 'composed of foliage, or leaves, heightened with gold, and interwoven with all sorts of flowers' (*Chloridia* 11-12). Cowley likewise conceives of his setting as a fashioned performance space: a topiary hedge forms a stage (*scena*), with shrubs and trees arching their boughs to make a roof; the flowers of climbing plants provide embossed decoration:

> Scena recurvatis stabat *Topiaria* ramis,
> Exigui formam Templi imitata cavam.
> Multa arbor, multúsque frutex bene olentibus umbris,
> Et lepidè pictis composuëre Tholum.
> *Punica* ibi, regale rubens, & candida *Iasme*,
> Candidáque *Idaliae Myrtus* amata *Deae*.
> Et flore argento simili stetit *Aurea Malus*,
> Tota *odor*; atque *Maris Ros* & utrúmque *Lilac*.
> Lenta *Periclymenos*, vultúque *Colutea* flavo,
> Intextúsque *Rosae* multus ubique décor.
> Et pulchrum quicunque alius caput extulit altè
> (Emblema adiectum) *Flos* variabat opus.

> There stood a stage made of hedging, with curved-back twigs, imitating the hollow shape of a tiny temple. Many a tree and many a shrub came together to form a dome, casting shadows with their fragrant and finely-decorated branches. There was the pomegranate of royal red, and the white jasmine, and the white myrtle, beloved of the Idalian goddess, and the golden crab-apple stood with its flower like silver, all scent, and the rosemary, and both kinds of lilac. The pliant honeysuckle, the colutea with its yellow face, and, interwoven on all sides, the great beauty of the rose, and whatever other flower raised its lovely head on high (an added ornament), enlivened the workmanship.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.127-138.

As the details accumulate, Cowley increasingly collapses the distinction between this natural temple and a built one:

> Vermiculatum opus egregiè, gemmísque per artem
> Dispositis solidum, tesserulísve putes.

> You would think it a work of art, cleverly inlaid, and encrusted with jewels or pieces of mosaic artfully arranged.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.145-146.[96]

While the strongest intertextual engagement is with *Chloridia,* Cowley also references its companion piece, *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, whose closing tableau of the crowned palm entwined by rose and lily finds an immediate echo in the rose and lily appointed consuls by Flora at the end of *Plantarum* 4. The relationship is strengthened by

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[95] The surviving examples are *Chloridia* (1631), *Tempe Restored* (1632), *The Shepherd's Paradise* (1632/3), *The Temple of Love* (1635), the anti-masques from *Florimène* (1635), and *Luminalia* (1638).

[96] The eponymous temple in Davenant's *The Temple of Love* (1635) is a man-made equivalent: 'this Temple instead of Columnes had termes of young Satyrs bearing up the returnes of Architrave Freeze and Coronice, all enrich'd of Gold-smiths worke, the further part of the Temple running farre from the eye was design'd of another kind of Architecture, with Pillasters, Neeches, and Statues; and in the midst a stately gate adorn'd with Colomns and their Ornaments, and a Frontispice on the top, all which seemed to bee of burnish'd gold.' Jones and Davenant 1634.

Cowley's handling of gender, which is informed by the complementary roles of male and female in the two Jonsonian masques. Karen Britland has argued for *Callipolis* as a celebration of the king's potent virility, of which the birth of the future Charles II in 1630 had provided firm evidence.[97] Following Martin Butler, she reads this virility as inextricably linked to the military prowess which enables him to vanquish the depraved lovers.[98] The closing image of the masque, the crowned palm entwined with rose and lily, represents the total assimilation of Henrietta Maria, 'locking her identity to a circle of impenetrable reciprocity with Charles.'[99] With the sequence of male-gendered plants – Sunflower, Gillyflower, Crocus and Amaranthus (above, p. 111-2) – that closes book 4, Cowley addresses questions of militarism, imperialism and paternity which reflect the Heroic Virtue of *Callipolis* rather than the Divine Beauty of *Chloridia*. These questions are to form an important strand in the *negotium animi* of the books.

Callipolis and *Chloridia* present king and queen, male and female as a perfect union of Heroic Virtue and Divine Beauty. Similarly, *Plantarum* 3 and 4 end with a harmonious combination of disparate elements: the fragrant rose of England unites with the nurturing lily of France to serve as consuls. Of the praetors, two (Gillyflower and Crocus) promote healing; one (Tulip) represents beauty; military valour is incorporated in the figure of Hellebore (4.1064-1069). But whereas *Callipolis* shows the identity of the queen subsumed into that of her husband, the role of Flora in setting up the new republic privileges the female. In the delicate balance of government between neo-Platonic values of peace and love and a *realpolitik* of war and imperialism, it is the former that is ultimately dominant.

In Chapter 1, I showed the unease with which dynastic monarchy co-existed within an increasing sense of the political as proper only to the 'public' sphere: for Henrietta's opponents, alert to the potentially corrupting and emasculating influence of the 'domestic', the queen's performance in court masque and her presentation as agent of change provided a focus for bitter criticism, of which Prynne's *Histriomastix* is the best-known example.[100] In the gynaecological debate of *Plantarum* 2, Cowley attempted to grant utterance to a female voice which could be both wise in its counsel and subservient in its activity, providing a template for dynastic monarchy in which the virile authority of the king could remain unchallenged (above, p. 100). In books 3 and 4, Cowley presents further voices, who articulate a tension between on the one hand a mutually beneficial government focused on peace and domestic wellbeing, and on the other an aggressively imperialistic one which seeks no external mandate. In evoking Henrietta Maria via intertextual engagement with Caroline masque, notably *Chloridia*, Cowley pays a graceful compliment to the patroness in whose service he had spent the years

[97] Britland 2006: 67.
[98] Britland 2006: 66-67; Butler 2008: 152-153; 291-294.
[99] Britland 2006: 68.
[100] Butler 2008: 130; Purkiss 2005: 64.

of the Civil War and Interregnum and who had come to his aid in the early 1660s when her son had failed to make good his promises.[101]

Allusion to the masques of the Caroline court, however, with their insistent focus on the happy and fertile union of Charles I and Henrietta, inevitably highlighted the contrast between the harmonious royal household of the 1630s and the visible promiscuity of Charles II.[102] Charles had notoriously insisted that his new queen Catherine of Braganza appoint his heavily pregnant mistress Barbara Castlemaine as a lady of the bedchamber in 1662; while there were still hopes that Catherine might produce an heir, Charles' already substantial flock of illegitimate children served as a reminder of the failure of the marriage to ensure dynastic succession.[103]

Cowley's own distaste for Charles' lifestyle is suggested by an anecdote in Pepys' diary for 8 December 1666. Pepys reports a story originating with Cowley, 'who was by and heard it,' that Thomas Killigrew criticised the king to his face for neglecting the business of government while 'imploying his lips and his prick about the Court.'[104] In this context, invocation of the emblems of dynastic succession at the end of *Callipolis* served as a piquant reminder of the different circumstances pertaining in the 1660s. Cowley's redeployment of the discourse of court entertainments of the 1630s is not merely nostalgic, but provides a strong if implicit cautionary exemplar to the monarch of the 1660s.

The thematic links between *Plantarum* 3-4 and *Chloridia* (and, to a lesser extent, *Callipolis*), are clear. There are further indications that Cowley is thinking about different types of aesthetic representation, and above all the competing claims of the visual arts and the written word to be able to render nature convincingly. The opening of book 3 emphasises the textuality of the work:

> Nunc, siquando, mihi, nunc laetùm, Musa, renide,
> Tempus adest *Veris*; Temporis ora refer.
> Nunc varia innumeros, Facundia, pande colores,
> Et quicquid Florum picta Poesis habet.
> Undique se trudant viridanti è carmine Gemmae,
> Et resonet toto Musica verna Libro:
> Undique *Laudis odor* dulcissimus halet, & omnis
> Plusquam *Paestanas* Pagina fundat opes.
> Undique formosas Lumen discriminet umbras,
> Nullaque non *Veris* gaudia Carmen agat.
>
> Now, if ever, now, Muse, smile happily upon me, the time of Spring is here; re-create the face of the season. Now, Eloquence, unfold the countless colours in all your variety, and

[101] It was through Henrietta's gift that Cowley received the manor of Oldcourt. Nethercot 1931: 208-212.
[102] Caroline domestic harmony: Sharpe 1987: 22-25; Veevers 1989: 196-205; Britland 2006: 66-73; Butler 2008: 150-165.
[103] Hyde 1759: 168-178. Catherine miscarried in 1666, 1668 and 1669. By the time of Cowley's death, Charles' illegitimate children included James, Duke of Monmouth; five children with Barbara Castlemaine; and at least two more children born before the Restoration.
[104] Latham and Matthews 1970-83: vii. 323-324, 400; cited in Hammond 2006: 115. This evidence for Cowley's presence at court and his role in the circulation of gossip as late as 1666 is an interesting counter to Sprat's account of a man buried deep in the country.

whatever flowers embroidered Poetry possesses. Let buds thrust themselves forth from my green song, and let springtide music resound through my whole book: let the sweetest scent of praise breathe from all its parts, and let every page pour forth riches greater than those of Paestum. Let the light pick out the shapely shadows on all sides, and let my song treat no joys but those of Spring.

Plantarum 3.1-10.[105]

The smiling countenance of the Muse is evoked as an embodiment of the mild sunshine of spring; the *Facundia* of poetic expression is to mimic the season's many-coloured growth. The poem is a green plant, swelling with buds; the book itself (*libro*, 6) echoes with the music of spring. When Cowley asks that the page pour forth the wealth of Paestum, he alludes not only to the roses for which the ancient city was renowned, but also to *Georgics* 4.116-124, where Virgil declines to treat the subject of gardens, which includes the roses of Paestum (*biferique rosaria Paesti*, *Georgics* 4.119).[106] Cowley's poem on garden flowers is thus keyed to the poem which Virgil declared himself unable to write: it is both a metaphorical flower, the heavily-scented Paestan rose, and a literary artefact firmly inscribed within the classical tradition. In the vivid imagery and the concern with verbalising the nature of poetry, Cowley also echoes the Pindaric victory ode.[107]

Later in the opening section, however, Cowley recognises the limitations of verbal description:

Tanta, tot istius spectacula Daedala lucis,
Pingere tu, credo, solus, *Apollo*, potes.
Tu qui peniculo radiorum pingis, *Apollo*,
Hoc varium mundi multicoloris opus.
An possis planè dubito describere versu,
Plantarum & Vatum sis licet ipse Deus.
Confiteor rem tantam operum non esse meorum.
Pauca legam, ritu praetereuntis Apis.
Fasciculus nobis e tanto *parvulus* horto,
Sufficiens unus, sit modò *dulcis*, erit.

The Daedalan sights of that day, which are so great, and so many, I think only you, Apollo, are able to depict. You who, with the brush of your rays, Apollo, paint all this different workmanship of the many-coloured world. I doubt whether you could clearly describe it in verse, even though you are yourself the god of plants and poets. I confess that so great a task is not in my power. I shall gather a few things, in the manner of a travelling bee. One tiny little nosegay will be enough for me from so great a garden, so long as it is a sweet one.

Plantarum 3.107-116.

The scene, itself a work of art, *Daedala spectacula* (107), can only be conveyed by the rays of Apollo, the sun god, which become the brush (109) with which the god paints the workmanship of the world (110). Apollo, as god of the sun, is depicted as the painter who makes the scene visible to a spectator; even he, god of poetry as well as plants, cannot adequately render it in verse. As the verb *lego* can mean both 'read' and 'gather', and as a *fasciculus* is both a booklet and a nosegay, Cowley's account of his attempt to convey the

[105] The *Gemmas* of *Poemata Latina* is corrected to *Gemmae* in the *Errata* to that volume.
[106] Rapin similarly claimed that his poem on gardens would supplement the *Georgics* (Rapin 1665: sig. e4^{v}).
[107] On Pindar's use of vegetative imagery for meta-poetic ends, see especially Steiner 1986: 40-51.

scene has him both gathering flowers into a nosegay and making a book from his reading.[108] However, Cowley compares the creative process not only to the gathering of flowers but also to the production of honey: like a bee, he gathers his material and makes it into something sweet (*dulcis*, 116). This comparison of reading and writing to apian industry is one with a very long literary pedigree, and had been used by Jonson with specific reference to the process of poetic imitation.[109] Jonson's advice to the poet to 'draw forth out of the best, and choisest flowers, with the Bee, and turne all into Honey' finds a ready echo in the sweet (*dulcis)* product of the choice items (*pauca*) gathered by Cowley's bee. The image suggests that, rather than providing a merely imitative poetic description, Cowley will supply a honey that reflects a Senecan and Jonsonian process of digestion and concoction.[110]

Ostensibly, the image of the bee represents an unfavourable comparison of the poet's powers of description to those of Apollo. However, this apparent modesty is double-edged, the self-deprecating tone undermined by the importance of the Senecan bee as a metaphor for *imitatio* and by Horace's use of the image in *Odes* 4.2, where he uses the image of the bee to express his own Callimachean poetics in contrast to the Pindaric swan.[111] The meta-literary importance of the bee in both Seneca and Horace strongly suggests a seriousness of purpose underlying Cowley's *praetereuntis apis*.

Cowley is contrasting his own literary output, the haphazard *fasciculus*, with the visual output of the paintbrush of Apollo. He is also implicitly contrasting his written text with the visual spectacle of staged masque. Moreover, this apparently unfavourable contrast is destabilised by the importance of the bee as a meta-literary image in Seneca and Horace, as well as in the Early Modern poets Jonson and Marvell. Via an exegetic and creative process, the poet, like the bee, will convert his material into something palatable and nourishing, as nectar to honey. Moreover, the opposition between the literary and the visual recalls a different Jonsonian locus, his time the long-standing and bitter dispute with Inigo Jones over the relative importance of text and spectacle in masque.[112] Cowley's literary text cannot compete with the *verismo* of Apollo's visual representation, but by its very selectivity it can offer the reader a more direct route to its underlying themes.

The opening of *Plantarum* 3-4 signals both identity and distance between the text and what it is describing, emphasising the poet's role in the process of composition in a way which alerts the reader to the presence of material beyond that which can be apprehended merely visually and which echoes Jonsonian ideas of the primacy of the textual in the

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[108] Lewis and Short 1969.
[109] *Timber: Or, Discoveries*, 2466-2482 (Herford and Simpson vol. 8: 638-639.) The passage is discussed at Peterson 2011: 3-5. For the metaphor of poetry as honey in Greek literature, see Crane 1987: 402; the key passages for Early Modern writers are Horace, *Odes* 4.2.27-32; Seneca, *Epist*. 84.4.
[110] Marvell's industrious bee in 'The Garden' and the Latin 'Hortus' is similarly keyed to poetic composition. See Colie 1970: 174-177; Shifflett 1998: 65-69.
[111] R. Thomas 2011: 103-121; G. Davis 1993: 133-143.
[112] Gordon 1949.

masque genre. This suggestion of the presence of allegorical and ideological readings is reinforced by the intertextual relationship with *Chloridia*, a relationship which helps to foreground Cowley's discourse of monarchy and its gendered inflection.

With the image of the bee, converting the nectar of the visual into the honey of poetry, Cowley alludes self-referentially to the process of poetic composition, contrasting it with visual representation. His stress on the literary character of his own artistry reflects the fact that his own engagement with masque will have been primarily with the printed texts that circulated widely following performance, with their minute details of scenery, costumes and special effects and, in the case of Jonson's masques, their extensive apparatus of footnotes.[113] In the discussion that follows, I focus on the textual rather than performance qualities of masque.

The Restoration turn to masque redeployed the vision of a universe centred on a divinely-ordained monarch, the emphasis on the peace and prosperity emanating from that monarch's wise government, and its role in providing an aesthetic resolution to opposition and disorder.[114] Reviving this dramatic vocabulary, however, Restoration writers were confronted with the difficulty that the pervasive early Stuart model, in which the monarch stood at the heart of a cosmic order which he both represented and upheld, could no longer pass unquestioned in a society which had executed one king and mandated the accession of another. Moreover, the celebration of the restored monarch posed the challenge of how to handle the preceding period: to elide it was to diminish the triumph that was the Restoration; to address it was to highlight the very real rupture with the past and to open a space for dissenting voices in a spirit that ran counter to the principles enshrined in the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion of 1660.[115]

In common with other writers of the period, Cowley deploys themes and tropes from early Stuart masque in order to explore the changed character of the restored monarchy and to engage with the trauma of the regicide and civil wars. What makes his treatment of these themes distinctive is the modulation of this discussion through Caroline neo-Platonism and its combination with the idiom of Horatian lyric.

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[113] Cowley himself had no role at court in the 1630s, nor did he belong to the Inns of Court, and is most unlikely to have been a spectator at any Caroline court masque (Butler 2008: 45-47), though he will have experienced the city pageants and the occasional dramatic productions at Oxford and Cambridge which owed much to the masque genre (Sharpe 1987: 214-217; Shohet 2010: 37-40). He will have seen, and perhaps co-written, Henrietta Maria's Christmas entertainment in Paris in 1646 (De Groot 2002: 1210; Britland 2006: 205-206).

[114] See e.g. Parry 1981: 184-203.

[115] See e.g. MacLean 1990: 256-267; Maguire 1992: 168-183.

4 Gender in *Plantarum* 3-4

In book 2 of the *Plantarum*, Cowley depicted an enclosed space from which males were explicitly excluded. In chapter 1, I showed how the poet's interaction with the natural world in that book is governed by the emasculation required by his poetic calling: as a 'eunuch', he engages in a collaborative rather than aggressive relationship with Nature (above, p. 96). Books 3 and 4 also engage with questions of gender, both through the gendering of the plants and through a contemporary discourse which associated retirement, including Horatian retirement, with the female voice.

The importance to Royalist writing of the trope of an Horatian-inflected country retreat has long been recognised.[116] This recognition is now nuanced by an awareness of the extent to which this apparent inward turn is problematised by the negative connotations of *otium* and by the associations of retirement and retreat with contemporary expectations of female behaviour.[117] For both male and female writers, the retirement pose became a means of masking engagement: 'to be a poet *of* retreat was by no means to be a poet *in* retreat.'[118] For Royalist writers of the Interregnum, retirement could represent both a feminising turn towards *otium* and passivity, and an opportunity for a masculinised and Stoic-inflected assertion political engagement.[119]. James Loxley has shown how Royalist writers denied this feminisation by using their writing as a form of political activism from retirement; on the other hand, Hero Chalmers has pointed to the extent to which Royalist political identity is reinforced by the celebration of the heavily feminised court culture of Henrietta Maria.[120]

While the writing of *Plantarum* 3-4 was not subject to the pressures of the Interregnum, the work remains one of – albeit elective – retirement and marginalisation, its use of the Latin language rendering it inaccessible to all but an educated and overwhelmingly male élite, and inherently cryptic, requiring knowledge of another language as the key to its decoding. We have already seen how Flora's contest is a neo-Stoic one, a means of exploring modes of kingship, and how the intertextual engagement with *Chloridia* generates a focus on Henrietta Maria (above, p. 127). As Flora's domain, Cowley's Stoic garden is

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[116] Miner 1971: 150-151; Anselment 1988: 13-20; Marcus 1989: 213-233; D. Smith 1994: 259-289; Loxley 1997: 201-202.
[117] Otium: Loxley 1997: 202-215. Female behaviour: Chalmers 2004: 105-110; Ross 2015: 125-127, 136-137.
[118] Scott-Baumann 2013: 81. See e.g. Loxley 1997: 215-234; Shifflett 1998: 1-7; Chalmers 2004: 125-126; King 2003: 48-49; Ross 2015: 125-127.
[119] Diane Purkiss, for example, has shown how elegies on the Regicide embraced imagery of castration, dissolution and liquefaction (Purkiss 2005: 113-119); James Loxley argues for a rhetoric of paradox by which imprisonment and degradation serve to emphasise the genuine freedom of the mind (Loxley 1997: 216-217). See also Chalmers 2004: 110-115; Ross 2015: 136-7; Potter 1989: 187-9 on the gendering of Royalist reactions to the Regicide; Wilcox 1990: 85-7 on the feminine aesthetic of devotional poetry of the period.
[120] Loxley 1997: 109; Chalmers 2004: 74-78.

already feminised, though its discourse is framed in terms of Henrietta Maria's neo-Platonism rather than those of gender *per se*.[121]

As suggested above (p.111), not all the plants in books 3 and 4 are significantly gendered: there are no clues as to the gendering, if any, of Moly and Poppy, while that of Hellebore and Peony is ambiguous.[122] Similarly, the plants in the epigram sequence in the first half of book 4 follow the gendering of their Latin names.[123] This vagueness contrasts sharply with the explicitly female world of book 2, from which males are rigorously excluded (2.1-6, 41-42) and whose assembly is addressed as *matres conscriptae* (2.133). Nonetheless, personified flowers are regularly gendered as female in English poetry of the period, notably the flower-metamorphoses in Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648), Hester Pulter's sequence 'The Garden', and Milton's Eve, the 'fairest unsupported flow'r'.[124] Equally, when Cowley depicts his flowers competing to be appointed *reginam*, 'queen' (3.123), he clearly envisages a female gathering, a gendering reinforced by the presidency of Flora. The reader is thus invited to assume a female gendering unless the text strongly indicates otherwise – as for example when Sunflower (*Flos Solis*, 4.830-855) emphasises his status as the true son of Apollo and asks the trees not to call him brother (*fratrem*, 840).[125]

Many of the odes in books 3 and 4 espouse the qualities associated with the court of Henrietta Maria.[126] The healing powers of Violet and Auricula accord with the Stuart neo-Platonic depiction of a chaste and nurturing feminine principle.[127] Tulip and Anemone, as we have seen, focus on their aesthetic beauty and, in the case of Tulip, the variety of her colours; Rose on her beauty, her powers of healing, and her association with Love.[128] The Lily uses the post-classical myth of her genesis from Juno's breast milk to stress her purity and constancy:

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[121] Compare too Pugh's analysis of the structure of the 1648 edition of *Il Pastor Fido*: 'the voices of various classical and modern authors are drawn into a dialogue [...] [with the result] that each tempers the views of the others, producing the effect of a multivocal counsel on political matters.' Pugh 2010: 8-9.

[122] I am very grateful to Professor J. Daniel Kinney for sharing his thoughts on the gender of Cowley's plants.

[123] For example, Daisy (Anthemis, f., 4.77-86), Campion (Lychnis, f., 4.155-162), Catch-Fly (Muscaria, f., 4.289-292), Gum-Cistus (Lada, f., 4.393-400),

[124] See Bushnell 2003: 117-122. Exceptions are the anonymous *Masque of Flowers* (1614) and Fanshawe's 'Ode on the Proclamation', in which the violet is a senator and the gillyflower 'prince o' the blood.' Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole* opens with a description of the Crown Imperial, who 'for his stately beautifulnesse, deserveth the first place in this our Garden of delight' (Parkinson 1629: 27).

[125] Similarly, Gillyflower (*Flos Iovis, Caryophyllus*, 4.860-887) describes himself as Iove natus ('son of Jupiter', 862). Crocus and Amaranthus describe themselves with the masculine (superbo, 'proud', 4.918; unicum, 'alone', 4.1017). Unlike Cowley's, Hester Pulter's sunflower ('Heliotropium') is female.

[126] Parry 1981: 185-190.

[127] Parry 1981: 187-188.

[128] Portraits of Henrietta Maria from the 1660s, such as Jean Petitot's miniature, now in the Royal Collection, continue to depict a beautiful woman, despite the fact that contemporary accounts speak disparagingly of Henrietta's faded looks. See e.g. Pepys' diary entry for 22 November, 1660 (Latham and Matthews vol. 1: 295).

Mens illa foelix quae, similis mei,
Sacrae colorem servat originis,
Candore nativo venusta,
Nec Maculata, nec Erubescens.

Happy is that mind which, like me, retains the colour of its sacred origin, lovely with its native whiteness, neither freckled, nor blushing.

Plantarum 4.691-693.[129]

Iris, also closely associated with Henrietta Maria (below, p. 142) alludes to her association with the rainbow to stress her powers against water in the body and her status as a pledge of future peace (3.874-879). Flora's return on the back of the rainbow (3.71-78) provides a double reference to Henrietta, anticipating (given the work's precise setting of May 1660) her return to England in October 1660.[130]

However, neo-Platonic virtues are not confined to female plants: with Crocus (4.916-987), Cowley provides an example of a masculine plant whose claim to the throne rests on his powers of healing. Nor do all female plants espouse neo-Platonic values. Crown Imperial (3.681-724) argues that her regal appearance entitles her to be crowned queen, though her case is undermined by Cowley's reference to her unpleasant smell (3.725-728). Hellebore is a soldier, proud both of her powers of resistance and her imperialistic achievements (3.225-340). The celebration of Henrietta Maria in *Plantarum* 3-4 is expressed in terms of an explicitly neo-Platonic femininity.

This said, divergent values are often expressed by plants gendered male. Narcissus, for example, retains the vanity and self-obsession of the beautiful boy of the *Metamorphoses* (3.339-410). Speaking in the fourth asclepiadic metre, and perhaps recalling the beautiful boy Ligurinus of *Odes* 4.1 and 10, Cowley's Narcissus is unsure whether he is more desired as a boy or a flower:

A Nymphis & adhùc color,
Et nostris decorant tempora floribus,
Me gestant tepido sinu,
An mallent Puerum dicere, nescio.

Even now I am still revered by the nymphs, and they adorn their brows with my flowers. They wear me in their warm breasts, and I don't know whether they would prefer to call me a boy.

Plantarum 3.619-622.

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[129] With *Nec Maculata*, the Lily also alludes to her English name, the Madonna lily, via the Virgin's cult-title Immaculata. On Marian imagery in the iconography of Henrietta Maria, see Bell 2008: 89-114. Despite Nethercot's emphatic denials, it seems at least possible that Cowley became a Catholic sympathiser if not an actual convert during his years in Henrietta's employment (Nethercot 1931: 131).

[130] Cowley celebrates Henrietta's return again at 6.1078-1088, where her delayed arrival is similarly glossed over.

As we shall see, Sunflower's emphasis on patrilineal descent presents a model of kingship which is ultimately to be rejected, and Gillyflower's focus on wealth injects a note of realism (below, p. 154).

The last plant to speak is the Amaranthus (1002-1029), who argues that, while some deny his tufts are true flowers, they outlast all their competitors:

> Sunt, Floris titulum qui mihi denegant,
> Et spicam vocitant Floream, Ineptuli.
> Non vulgare quidem (nec pudet hoc) decus,
> Sed privum & proprium est mihi.
>
> Me formâ fateor surgere dispari,
> Et vultu insolito; sed quid habet novi
> Immortalia si germina differunt,
> A Mortalibus omnibus?
>
> Some people deny me the title of a flower, and they call me a flowery tuft, the fools. This is indeed not a common distinction (nor am I ashamed of it), but it is private and proper to me. I confess that I grow with different form, and unusual appearance, but what's surprising if immortal plants are different from all mortal ones?
>
> *Plantarum* 4.1018-1025.[131]

Victoria Moul has commented on the Amaranthus' refusal to conform to the conventions of Horatian erotic lyric: 'he is unattractive, unfading and loses none of his power when plucked.'[132] But if we compare his longevity with that of the Rose, who concludes book 3, we see Cowley juxtaposing two contrasting versions of immortality. While the cymes of the Amaranthus are physically everlasting, for the Rose it is her scent which guarantees immortality:

> Infimus *Vermis* remanente vitâ
> Mortuo fertur melior *Leone*.
> Ipsa viventes validósque Flores
> Mortua vinco,
>
> Mortuam si me reputare fas est
> Cuius insignem vel adhuc Cadaver
> (Corporis functi quasi vivus Haeres)
> Spirat odorem.
>
> The lowest worm, while its life remains, is considered better than the dead lion. I myself vanquish sturdy, living flowers even when I am dead. If it is right to think me dead, whose corpse (as though it were a living heir of the dead body) even yet breathes out my extraordinary scent.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.1040-1047

She is proleptically dismissive of the Amaranthus' claim: it is the nature of flowers to be short-lived, she argues – the survival of her fragrance is more significant than the Amaranthus' lasting flowers. The contrast is between the corporeality of the Amaranthus and the spiritual essence of the Rose, which, in keeping with the work's neo-Platonic cast, is able to retain its

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[131] Amaranthus' male gendering is reinforced by his association with Horace's Ligurinus. See Moul 2012: 99.
[132] Moul 2012: 100.

identity in the face of bodily decay. The point was noted by Robert Hinman in his study of Cowley's poetry: 'The persistence of its perfume makes the rose the true amaranth, the immortal, heavenly flower, a symbol of infinite love transplanted to finite nature.'[133] The immortal and divine essence of the female flower transcends the corporeal matter of the male.

And yet book 4 concludes with an uneasy juxtaposition between Rose and Amaranthus. Rose is chosen as consul in the new republic; Amaranthus is not even appointed praetor. But, by virtue of his being the last competitor to speak, his words have the opportunity to outlast the Rose's fragrance. Equally, he comes at the end of a series of male plants – Sunflower, Gillyflower, Crocus – whose gendering signals the imminent transition to the hexameter books 5 and 6 and the increasingly epic colouring which will culminate in the narrative of the Battle of Lowestoft. The survival of the unlovely tufts of the Amaranthus, like the intrusion into Cowley's narrative of the Wars of the Roses (below, p. 146) is expressive of a tension between the evanescent grace and beauty of the flowers of Flora's republic and the masculine pragmatism of the Amaranthus, for whom endurance is all. As the book ends, Flora's gentle domesticated republic gives way to a more dourly utilitarian and masculinised world-view.

At the end of *Plantarum* 2, the traditional gender hierarchy was reinforced, when the irruption of the male gardener forcibly concluded the plants' assembly (above, p. 48). Similarly, in *Chloridia*, as Erica Veevers and Karen Britland have shown, the opposition between male and female is one in which the male is ultimately dominant, and in which the masculine principle is associated with Law and the intellect, whereas the feminine 'chastely inhabits the realm of nature and generation.'[134] The gendering in *Plantarum* 3-4 works rather differently. While Flora's presidency retains a female control over the immediate setting, the sequence of male-gendered plants in the second half of book 4 effects a transition from a neo-Platonic world of love, beauty and towards the narratives of war and imperialism that underpin the final two books.

5 *Plantarum* 3-4 and Royalism

Callipolis concludes with the monarchist tableau of the crowned palm tree, and *Chloridia* with Fame and the arts vowing to sing the praise of Chloris/Henrietta, 'the queen of flowers', to the king (243). *Plantarum* 4, on the other hand, in a radical departure from the idiom of Caroline masque, ends with the establishment of a republic. Rather than signalling

[133] Hinman 1960: 183. The association of the Rose with the divine strengthens the potential for reading the poem as a Royalist allegory of the regicide. Elegies on the king's death emphasised survival through remembrance: see Lacey 2003: 97-98. Marvell's 'The Unfortunate Lover' deploys the same conceit ('Yet dying leaves a perfume here,/And music within every ear', 61-62), though the extent to which the poem addresses the regicide remains a matter for debate (N. Smith 2007: 88; Wilcher 2001: 306-307).
[134] Veevers 1989: 176; Britland 2006: 75-76.

an anti-monarchical ideological shift, however, Cowley succeeds in maintaining a consistently Royalist stance, albeit one which reflects and indeed promotes the changed character of the post-Restoration monarchy.

The books' Royalism is very strongly signalled by the Maytide setting. This is, as Cowley explicitly states, the date of the Restoration; moreover, celebration of the traditional May Day festival had by the 1640s become an overt Royalist statement. Promoted by the early Stuart monarchs as a focus for the expression of loyalism and national identity, Mayday and other pre-Reformation holidays were viewed with suspicion by the king's Puritan opponents, partly through their association with the Catholic Church but also as a result of the licentious behaviour they were believed to encourage.[135] The fact that the Restoration was celebrated with the erection of maypoles, most famously in the Strand, is evidence of the continuing Royalist resonance of May Day celebrations.[136] Syrithe Pugh has shown how Herrick combines the Anglican observance of May Day with the unbridled sexuality associated with the similar Roman festival of the Floralia to generate a Royalist defence of the festivities.[137] Cowley's Flora thus carries a double, Royalist, signification: via the identification with Chloris, she becomes a representation of Henrietta Maria; but she is also the presiding deity of a festival that had come to be an expression of Royalist resistance. The Royalism of *Plantarum* 3-4 is one which encompasses both the rarefied world of court masque and the demotic celebration of traditional holidays.

It is important therefore to interrogate the character of the 'republic' founded at the end of book 4. As Edward Paleit has argued, seventeenth-century uses of the term 'republic' were by no means confined to the 'proto-democratic' sense in which modern literary scholars are apt to read them, and the imposition of a binary opposition between 'republic' and 'monarchy' is over-simplistic.[138] While the term could be used in this sense, and indeed was during the 1650s, it frequently carried a meaning more akin to the modern sense of 'state' or 'commonwealth.'[139] The English 'republic' of the 1650s had from 1653 been led by the monarchical Lord Protector Cromwell; equally, Cowley uses the term positively in *Plantarum* 6 to describe both the Golden Age (6.466-467) and a world opened up to international trade (6.499-500). Moreover, although Flora declares that as a Roman goddess she cannot endorse monarchy, the republic she establishes is by no means a proto-democracy. Its officers are appointed, not elected; and with the appointment of the Lily and the Rose Cowley once more alludes to Henrietta Maria, the 'rose and lily queen', and to her son Charles II, offspring of the English rose and the French lily. Flora's constitutional settlement explicitly reminds members of the new government that they have been granted a duty, not an honour (*datum officii est, non munus honoris*, 4.1070), a detail which reflects the seismic change in

[135] Marcus 1989: 20-21.
[136] Rogers 1985; Marcus 1989: 262-263.
[137] Pugh 2010: 22-29; 48-49.
[138] Paleit 2013: 17-19.
[139] Paleit 2013: 18-19.

the character of English kingship, with the monarch now requiring the sanction of law as well as dynastic right.[140]

Syrithe Pugh's reading of Fanshawe's *Il Pastor Fido* volume, dedicated to the future Charles II, shows that this insistence on a king's duty towards his subjects and on monarchy as a consensual form of government could be accommodated to Royalist discourse from as early as the 1640s. Pugh considers the volume in the light of the humanist tradition of advice to a ruler, arguing that the engagement with classical and modern authors in the material appended to the Guarini translation functions as 'a multivocal counsel on political matters and especially on the nature of kingly authority.'[141] In particular, Pugh argues that the Fanshawe volume urges on the young prince the importance of heeding his advisors and governing with a view to the public good; she also detects the implication that his reign will be conditional upon his meeting these requirements.[142]

Fanshawe's volume was addressed to a teenaged prince in whose service he held a key advisory role, and was published at a moment when that prince's incarcerated father stood on the verge of losing both throne and head. The *Plantarum Libri Sex* carries no royal dedication, and Cowley was never part of Charles' inner circle. Aubrey's statement that 'the Prince knew not Latin well', if true, makes it unlikely that the king would have read the *Plantarum*, even had it been published in Cowley's lifetime.[143] However, the cautionary note identified in the evocation of the household of Charles I and Henrietta (above, p.130) suggests that *Plantarum* 3-4 does make a claim to an advisory function, however muted and indeed ultimately fictive that claim may be. In the various and competing claims to monarchy of the polyphonic voices of *Plantarum* 3-4, it is possible to read a discussion of the nature of kingship which, like Fanshawe's *Il Pastor Fido* volume, comes down in favour of a constitutional and limited monarchy in which the good of the citizens is paramount. As such it stands as a counterpoint to the overtly panegyric book 6, with its presentation of the Restoration as a new Golden Age and its aggressively imperialist vision of Britain's destiny.

5.1 War and Peace

The first flower to speak in *Plantarum* 3-4 is the Christmas rose, *Helleborus niger* (*Plantarum* 3.225-340). Hellebore explains that other flowers are more beautiful (222-235); but the beauty of women and flowers is fleeting and trivial (237-248). In particular, flowers are

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[140] Sawday 1992: 172; Maguire 1992: 4-5.
[141] Pugh 2010: 8.
[142] Pugh 2010: 8, 92: 'the young Prince is being admonished that, if he wishes to possess the throne [...] his only chance is not to rely on his hereditary claim [...] but rather to win the acclaim and love of the people, aided by [...] his tutor-like counsellor and poet – one might almost say, to behave as though the kingdom were a meritocracy or an elective monarchy.'
[143] 'Life of Cowley' (Bennett 2015). The detail comes from Aubrey's account of Cowley visiting Charles in Paris in December 1648: Cowley proposes the *Sortes Virgilianae* as an alternative to Charles' suggestion of a game of cards. The king's limited command of Latin is further indicated by Mordaunt's account of his anxiously enquiring whether John Evelyn's proposed panegyric would be in Latin, and if so whether it would be very long (BL Add MSS 78679, f. 35, Mordaunt to John Evelyn, 23 April 1661).

unable to withstand the winter cold: any who can survive such conditions is a worthy winner (255-264). Kings are in the image of God, and are distinguished by virtue and wisdom: these are the qualities which will win Hellebore the prize (265-268). Other flowers revel drunkenly in the spring, but as soon as winter appears they vanish underground, many to die there (269-286). However, while other plants lie in their hiding-places, deaf and dumb, Hellebore has the courage to raise an embattled head (*belligerum caput*, 294), resisting winter's onslaught with courage and intelligence (*virtutis, rationis*, 295). Flora should give the prize to a plant which can endure (297-312). But it is not enough for a king to remain undefeated in civil war (*invictum bellis civilibus*, 315): he must also be a conqueror. Hellebore can amass more titles than the most celebrated Roman emperor (317-320), with powers over cancer, leprosy, fever, dropsy, vertigo, epilepsy, apoplexy, and, most importantly of all, insanity (321-338). The empire of Hellebore extends over the whole world, and is greater than that of Caesar (339-340).

Hellebore is the only winter flower to enter the contest, and the only competitor to speak in the elegiac metre of the framing narrative and of the preceding books.[144] She is a *fortem ducem* ('a brave leader', 3.302), who confidently expresses the expectation that other plants of the Hellebore family will yield up the title (*regna*, 312). She is also given a contemporary relevance. The conventional Royalist association of the Interregnum with winter has already been reinforced by the opening of *Plantarum* 3, with its combination of the Restoration and the coming of spring. This association is further strengthened when Hellebore uses military imagery to depict winter:

> Siquis subiecit pedibus strepitúmque furorémque
> Et raucas hyemis terribilesque minas.
> Indomitúsque Nives calcat, pluviásque repellit
> *Victor*, & aeriae bella sonora plagae.
> Huic, *Dea*, pro meritis da *Sceptra hortensia* tantis,
> *Imperium* in Flores da, *Dea iusta*, tuos.
>
> If any crushes underfoot the din and frenzy, and the terrible howling threats of winter; and fearlessly tramples the snows, and drives back the rains victorious, and the battle-din of a blast of wind: to this one, goddess, give the garden's sceptre, for these great qualities, give her, just goddess, dominion over your flowers.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.259-264.[145]

Winter is an enemy whose effects are characterised with a string of martial images – the din of battle, the blast of trumpets (*raucas* – a word frequently used of battle-trumpets), the fighting of the winds.[146] It is also described in terms which evoke civil war: the land is laid waste (*despoliatur*, 274) and overwhelmed (*obruta*, 277); plants die, or go to ground in fear (284), where they lie deaf and dumb (295). Nature herself seems buried in a marble tomb (281); with the detail of the ailing sun, in its guise as Apollo, god of plants (285-286), the

[144] No plant speaks in propria persona in the elegiac epigram sequence of 4.63-502.
[145] There may be a faint echo here of Ovid's *arbitrium tu, dea, floris habe* (*Fasti* 5.212), used as the epigraph to *Chloridia*.
[146] Lewis and Short 1969.

regular association of the sun with the king, and the related image of the monarchy as representative of the ordered cosmos of nature, the reader may glance towards the regicide.[147] With the reference to civil wars (*invictum bellis civilibus*, 315), the political siting becomes impossible to ignore. Hellebore, like the king she describes, has many of the qualities of an old cavalier, a war-hardened survivor of civil war, emerging bloody but unbowed into the sunlight of the Restoration.

There is evident humour in the portrayal of Hellebore's proud fortitude and her contempt for the flowers who take flight at the first onset of winter (shrinking violets indeed, 3.265-270). This unlovely survivor of the cavalier winter, with her bellicose imperialist pretensions, has no place in the serene garden of Flora's court. Underlining this marginal status are the workmanlike elegiacs, which contrast with the sophisticated lyric metres of her competitors. With their indifference, the flowers dismiss not only the memory of the violent conflict of civil war and the dark years of the Interregnum, but also the prospect of future imperial conquest, choosing instead the monarchy of peace, order and harmony so strongly conveyed in Caroline masque of the 1630s. And yet, her appointment as praetor at the end of book 4 is an acknowledgement that neither past nor future military conflict can be ignored.

The importance of peace is further explored in 'Iris' (3.809-879). Cowley has already signalled in the opening section of *Plantarum* 3 that the return of Charles entails the return of peace:

> Ille dedit toti Pacem mitissimus Orbi.
> Ille *fores Iani clausit* ubíque sui.
> Ille dedit maius tibi, *fausta Britannia*, donum,
> Ille tibi Pacem *Carolidémque* dedit.
>
> That most gentle [year] gave peace to the whole world, it everywhere closed the gates of its own Janus. That year gave a greater gift to you, favoured Britain, it gave to you peace and the son of Charles.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.61-64.

The image is concentrated in Iris' dual representation of both rainbow and flower, an image which in turn once more leads back to Henrietta Maria. Henrietta danced the role of Iris, the fleur-de-lys of France, in the 1623 *Grand ballet de la reyne représentant les Festes de Junon la nopcière*, reputedly secretly observed by her future husband as he travelled to woo the Spanish Infanta.[148] In *Chloridia*, it is the goddess Iris who announces to Juno that Cupid is suing for pardon. The nexus of imagery centred on the Iris is especially rich: as the rainbow goddess, she is the Homeric messenger of the gods; but the rainbow also represents the Old Testament story of God's covenant to Noah after the flood.

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[147] The imagery, while common in Early Modern thought, is particularly pervasive in the discourse of the Stuart masque. See e.g. Sharpe 1987:197-211.
[148] Britland 2006: 17, 85.

Cowley introduces the rainbow at 3.73, when he claims to have seen Flora returning to England in triumph on the back of a great rainbow (*Plantarum* 3.71-76). With a witty allusion to recent experiments in optics, he refers to the special lenses (*specilla*, 74) supplied by the Muse, which enabled him to see the goddess.[149] The detail draws attention both to the vatic ability of poets to see things otherwise concealed, and to the power of poetry to render them visible to a reader. Again he draws attention to the aestheticising process of poetry: Cowley's poetic power enables him both to see Flora's triumphal procession in tandem with the return of Charles and to render it verbally for his reader. And his heuristic emphasis serves to literalise Flora's return: Cowley has seen for himself, he claims, not just Flora, but the gods and the spirits of the countryside (3.71). Leah Marcus and Syrithe Pugh have both shown how the celebration of ancient, prohibited, festivities and customs could become a form of Royalist resistance or protest during the Interregnum; here, Cowley depicts the Restoration as enabling their revival.[150] Whereas twentieth-century critics often censured Caroline masque for its perceived retreat from political tensions into a masque discourse where an insipid neo-Platonic love conquered all, for Cowley the very possibility of the re-emergence of that discourse after the preceding two decades is a cause for celebration, for *purpureo triumph*o.[151]

The Iris is given her own poem, in hendecasyllables, a metre associated with Catullus, at 809-879.[152] The opening lines closely intertwine the plant with the rainbow, with monarchy, and with peace.

> Si *Forma* imperium potest mereri,
> (*Flores* forsitan inter & meretur)
> En ora imperio creata florum,
> Et cognomine pulchriora Gemmâ
> Et cognomine pulchriora Divâ
> Erectâ ad superos verenda fronte,
> Et *coelum* referente, sed *Serenum*.
> Par est Regia Numini potestas
> Par Coelo facies decétque Regem,
> Nullus principe dignior potenti
> Quam mollis titulus Serenitatis,
> Nec certè satis est mihi esse pulchrae,
> Omnis livor abest malignitásque

> If beauty can earn dominion, (and perhaps it even does earn it among flowers), behold my face, created for dominion over the flowers, both more beautiful than the gem which shares its name and than the rainbow-goddess which shares its name, worthy of reverence, with my face standing tall to the gods, and resembling the sky, but only a calm one. My royal power is equal to a god's, my appearance is equal to heaven and befits a king; no title is more worthy of a

[149] Descartes' Discourse on the Method (1637), with its work on the law of refraction, had been published in Latin in Amsterdam in 1656. Isaac Newton's work on colour, published in 1672, seems to have been begun at the beginning of 1666.
[150] Marcus 1989: 140-168; Pugh 2010: 46-49.
[151] See e.g. Parry 1989: 202-203; Wedgwood 1960: 43: '[After *Tempe Restored* (1632)], the Court was gradually shutting itself up in a world of delighted self-congratulation into which the noisy politics of Europe were permitted to penetrate only in polite disguise.'
[152] The Catullan flavour is maintained with diminutives (*ocellis*, 825); with the description of Iris' scent as a service to the nose (*nasum obligo*, 826), a detail which recalls Catullus' Fabullus (Catullus 13); with Catullan vocabulary (*delicatae*, 855; *venusta*, 874, 875); and with the poem's sensuous atmosphere. See Gaisser 1993: 217, 221-222; Ford 2013: 57-58.

powerful prince, than the gentle one of serenity. Nor indeed is it enough for me to be beautiful: I am completely lacking in envy and malice.

Plantarum 3.809-821.[153]

Iris proceeds to describe her qualities: her root, source of the scented powder orris (826-842), and her medicinal powers as a diuretic, emetic and cathartic, particularly against dropsy (843-863). Like the warrior-maiden Penthesilea and the goddess Minerva, she combines beauty with martial power (845-848), *forma* with *virtus* (849-850).

At 829 she describes herself as *Ridenti mihi dulce, dulce olenti*, an incongruous description – why should the Iris be laughing? – surely included for the sake of the allusion to Horace, *Odes* 1.22 (*dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo/ dulce loquentem*, 23-24). Horace's poem celebrates the special powers he has as a love poet, resulting in his miraculous escape from a wolf; Iris stresses that, for all her beauty and fragrance, she can see off the tawny lioness jaundice (851-855); dropsy flees faster than a hare or a mule (856-857). In the Horatian ode, his status as a poet (*dum meam canto Lalagen*, 10) gives him protection: the aesthetic qualities of his output make him a favourite of the gods. Horace's poetry is beautiful; Iris herself is beautiful. The Horatian allusion serves to emphasise the aesthetic power of the plant and to collapse it with the medicinal power with which it is ostensibly contrasted:

Me pictam fugit obstinata *Bilis*,
Me Luxus comitem *Cupidinisque*
Unguentis madidam fugit, mihique
Indignata velut *Leana*, cedit
Hostis fulva feróxque delicatae.

Stubborn jaundice flees me in my embroidered dress, flees me, though I am the companion of luxury and of Cupid, moist as I am with unguents, and to me, like an indignant lioness, the tawny and savage enemy yields, delicate though I am.

Plantarum 3.851-855.

The poem closes with a conflation of the biblical story of the Flood with the very similar classical myth, best known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*Plantarum* 3.864-879; Genesis 6.9-9.17; *Metamorphoses* 1.199-437). Iris explains that Jupiter set the rainbow in the sky as a pledge against further inundation, and that she, the plant, functions not merely as a token of this pledge, but, through her powers as a diuretic, is able literally to prevent the body being flooded (*Plantarum* 3.874-879).[154] Jupiter's cosmic deluge is closely identified with the disease dropsy; as Iris, the rainbow, reassures against future cataclysm, so does Iris, the plant, heal the body. Via her association with Henrietta Maria, Iris represents a restored monarchy which will guarantee peace, and, specifically, an end to civil war.

[153] I read the ablatives *Gemma* and *Diva* as comparative rather than instrumental, despite misgivings as to whether Iris would claim to be more beautiful than a goddess.
[154] The rainbow does not appear in Ovid's flood narrative; rather, the goddess Iris is shown encouraging the clouds to produce more rain (*Metamorphoses* 1.270-271).

The serenity of the rainbow is undermined at the very end of book 3, in a complex passage where Cowley addresses the civil war in a digression on the Wars of the Roses (1082-1115). The passage breaks off abruptly:

> Quo me, Musa, rapis? vel quo producis ineptum?
> Non haec est numeris res tenuanda meis.
> Dicam ego Plantarum lusus rixásque iocosas,
> Par erit his forsan Fistula nostra modis.
>
> Whither, Muse, do you carry me off? Where do you lead me, ill-equipped as I am? This is not a matter to be diminished by my verses. I will tell of the games and playful tussles of the plants, perhaps my pipe will be equal to these strains.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.1116-1119.

The intertextual and generic implications of these lines are interesting. *Quo me, Musa, rapis* is a particularly Horatian echo. It virtually quotes *Odes* 3.25.1 (*Quo me, Bacche, rapis*); the reference to the theme's unsuitability for the poet's verse directly echoes *Odes* 3.3.69-70 (*Non hoc iocosae convenient lyrae/Quo, Musa, tendis?*) which, like the *Plantarum* passage, concludes a section on the infamy of civil war. The phrase *lusus rixasque iocosas* belongs to Roman erotic poetry, whether the Horatian symposiast, the elegiac lover, or the Ovidian *lusor amorum*, where its component words may refer to love or to love poetry.[155] It seems to derive most closely from *Odes* 3.24.1-4, where Horace addresses a wine-jar: *seu tu querellas sive geris iocos/ seu rixam et insanos amores*. The *fistula*, however, is the shepherd's reed-pipe, and thus forms a rare explicit indication of the books' generic affinity with pastoral. The lines thus reveal the poem's conscious engagement with a wide generic range.[156] They also belong to the tradition of the *recusatio*, or 'generic disavowal', the graceful refusal by a poet to handle an explicitly political or epic theme, whose paradoxical outcome may be none other than the deft incorporation of that theme into the refusal itself.[157] In *Odes* 3.3 Horace's emphatic self-presentation as a lyric poet nonetheless came at the end of a passage on civil war; in *Odes* 1.6 he declines to write an epic for Agrippa via a list of Homeric examples. Cowley declares himself a love poet and a pastoral poet, not Lucan or Statius (1120-1123); but in repudiating the theme of civil war he nonetheless gives it space in his poetic text.

Whereas Hellebore's militaristic values were firmly thrust into the past, here Cowley acknowledges that peace is not the whole story, that writing about plants need not be confined to *lusus rixasque iocosas*. In the section on the Wars of the Roses, the flowers turn their thorns against one another (1095 – a clear allusion to Lucan, *BC* 1.8); the lily of France and the thistle of Scotland opportunistically attack (1098-1101); Mars gains too much influence over flowers born from Venus (1104-1105) and rampages over England like a wild

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[155] *Rixa*: e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3.14.26; 1.13.11; Propertius 1.16.6. *Lusus*: Propertius 2.23; Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.86; *Tristia* 4.10.1. *Iocosus*: Horace, *Odes* 3.3.69; Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 387-368.
[156] Moul 2012: 87-88.
[157] See e.g. P. Davis 1991: 28-30; S. Harrison 2007: 20-21.

boar destroying a garden (1108-1115).[158] Cowley's celebration of the Restoration peace thus becomes an explicitly conscious decision: beneath the *lusus rixasque iocosas* lurks a darker world of thorns, pests and weeds.

This elision is particularly apparent in the closing section of book 3. As the Damask Rose finishes speaking, the other roses cluster around her in the manner of a candidate's supporters in a Roman election, or an army (*suffragatores*, 1062; *phalanx*, 1063). Individual attributes are described in strongly military terms: the yellow rose is *bello minus utilis* (1064), and lacks the captured trophies of vanquished diseases (*nullaque morborum capta trophaea ferens*,1065); the term *phalanx* is repeated, this time for the advance of the white rose (1066); the red rose marches with her banner:

> *Tertia Vexillo*, Bellatrix maxima, *rubro*,
> Et non pacifero laeta colore micat.
> Immodico fluxu labefactos sustinet artus,
> Humorúmque vagam sistit ubique fugam.
> Illa feros hostes ligat astringentibus armis,
> Vincula dat victis, implicitosque tenet.
> Subsidio illa solet *Cordi Cerebróque* venire,
> Cum Cor aut Cerebrum vis inimica premit.

> Third comes the greatest warrior-maiden with her red banner, and gleams, joyful in her warlike colour. She holds up limbs made unstable by excessive flux, and everywhere halts the wandering flight of the humours. She ties up fierce enemies with her cooling weapons, chains them when conquered, and keeps them bound. It is her custom to come to the support of the heart and the brain, when a hostile force assails the heart or brain.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.1068-1075.

The description of the warlike nature of the red rose leads smoothly into the meditation on the Wars of the Roses, described as *Longum et lacrymabile bellum/ Et certamen atrox* (a long and lamentable war, and a savage contest, 1084-1085). The flowers become metonyms for the warring houses of York and Lancaster, with the metonymy extended still further to encompass England's hostile neighbours: the lily of France and the thistle of Scotland (1098-1101). Allusion to Lucan, so often invoked in contemporary treatments of the English civil war, emphasises the bloody reality of the conflict, and drives home its foreshadowing of recent events:

> Nec miser *Aemathiae* bis inundans sanguine *Campus*,
> Spectavit maius nobiliúsque nefas [...]
> [...] Quis furor, ô, vestras in vosmet vertere Spinas,
> O Consanguineae, congenerésque *Rosae*?

> Nor did the wretched plain of Aemathia, twice seething with blood, behold a greater or more noteworthy crime [...] What madness, o, what madness turned your own thorns on yourselves, o consanguineous and kindred roses?
>
> *Plantarum* 3.1086-1087, 1094-1095.[159]

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[158] The allusion here to Juno's conception of Mars from a flower supplied by Flora (Ovid, *Fasti* 5.229-258) anticipates the extended treatment of the myth in book 4 (544-655).

[159] Lucanian intertextuality in the *Plantarum* will be discussed in depth in chapter 3. For the importance of Lucan in seventeenth-century political thought, see Norbrook 1999: 23-34; Paleit 2013.

When the poet abruptly wrests himself back to his stated theme of *plantarum lusus rixasque iocosas* (1118), the damage, so to speak, is already done. Cowley may assign *praelia plantarum et plusquam civilia bella* (1120) to Lucan or Statius, but in practice his intrusion of brutal civil war into the light-hearted contest of the flowers makes it impossible to ignore the potential for allegorical, political reading throughout.

We should also note that the battles proper to Lucan and Statius are battles of plants, *praelia plantarum* (1120). The phrase has a twofold significance. First, Cowley is setting up an equivalence between his own battles of plants and the human warfare depicted by Lucan and Statius, an equivalence reinforced by the phrase *plusquam civilia bella*, an almost exact quotation of the first line of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Cowley signals a wider application for his plantlore, confirming the text's potential for reading as a discussion of recent events. Second, Cowley is not setting a peaceful world of plants in opposition to a warlike one of humans: plants and humans have both *lusus rixasque iocosas* and *praelia [...] et plusquam civilia bella*; peace and war represent two alternative modes of existence. His theme in books 3 and 4 may be a vision of government devoted to peace and healing and suited to a reading of the Horatian lyric voice as concerned with *lusus rixasque iocosas*, but the militaristic and adversarial tone proper to the epic voice of Lucan and Statius provides a way of representing an alternative vision of imperialism and conquest. The digression on the Wars of the Roses shows the impossibility of treating the two as mutually exclusive, and paves the way for the triumphalist panegyric tone of the final, hexameter, books of the *Plantarum*.

5.2 Monarchy and Healing: Violet and Auricula

This contrast between aggression and healing is apparent in the Violet's ode. As noted above (p. 115), Victoria Moul has shown how Cowley's appropriation of Horatian tropes serves to contrast the grandeur of the political and military themes of Horatian and Pindaric victory odes with the small-scale pharmaceutical victories of the Violet.[160] Against this grandeur is set the poem's lyricism, which, as Moul has noted, recalls Ovid, Horace and Catullus.[161] This range of allusion, most obviously to Horace's political odes, while certainly pointing up the contrast beween Augustus and Violet, also encourages a political reading. As in Marcus' reading of 'Upon Appleton House', the insistence of the military imagery thrusts the political upon the reader.[162] When Violet describes herself as driving out her enemies *minimo tumultu*, a *sine clade victrix* ('with the least amount of fuss', 'victorious without slaughter', 519-520), she recalls the well-worn theme in Restoration panegyric of the bloodless nature of Charles II's return.[163] And when she describes the enemy yielding shame-faced to *herbae/Ad coronamenta epulasque natae* (525-526), there is an unmistakable echo of Charles' royal lineage. Charles himself is explicitly described as a healer in book 6, closing

[160] Moul 2012: 94.
[161] Moul 2012: 92-93.
[162] Above, p. 122, n. 6.
[163] Sawday 1992: 82-83, 172-173.

the wounds and erasing the scars of civil war (6.1090-1092). For the Violet, the victory of healing the body becomes the equivalent of a military one; equally, for the restored monarchy, the need for national healing is as pressing as the desire for imperial and commercial glory.

Other plants, however, take a different view. Violet is followed by the Auricula, who sets herself in direct opposition to the world of human activity and takes an assertively apolitical stance. The metre is the First Asclepiad, used by Horace in *Odes* 1.1, 3.30 and 4.8, all poems dealing with poetic immortality and all placed at strategic points in their respective collections.[164] Cowley signals that his poem, too, will be linked to poetics by alluding in the framing narrative to the well-worn poetic trope of the poet wishing for multiple mouths in order to do his subject justice:

> Centena attollens quae prodigaliter ora,
> Centeno poterat (cùm lubet) ore loqui.
>
> Who, extravagantly raising her hundred faces, was able to speak (when it pleased her) with a hundred mouths.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.551-552.[165]

The Auricula portrays herself as a poetic text, urging Flora not to gather a *fasciculum* ('booklet'; also 'nosegay') from her rivals, since she, with her many-flowered stems, is a *fasciculus* in herself, a friendly version of the many-headed monster Geryon (3.553-559).[166] She goes on to compare herself to a star composed of many smaller stars:

> Me sidus radiis dulce salubribus
> Multis compositum fer, *Dea*, Stellulis.
>
> Carry me, goddess, a star, lovely with my with health-giving rays, made up of many starlets.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.560-561.

Given the shared metre and subject-matter, we are directed to the closing lines of *Odes* 1.1:

> quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres,
> sublimi feriam sidera vertice.
>
> Horace, *Odes* 1.35-36.

Horace asks his patron to place him among the ranks of lyric poets, an action which will enable him to reach the stars. Auricula asks Flora to carry her, a star made of many stars. Whereas Horace want to ascend to the stars, Auricula is herself a star; and, what is more, a multiple star. As a poetic text, she embodies the entire literary canon.

The remainder of the poem is devoted to asserting the Auricula's superiority to humankind. Her medicinal power lies in her ability to stabilise the head, the chief part of all

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[164] R. Thomas 2011: 184-186.
[165] Homer, Iliad 2.488-490; see also Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.625-627; *Plantarum* 2.39-40, 3.
[166] For the various meanings of fasciculus, see above, pp. 131-2.

(*principis omnium partis*, 561-2), which is nonetheless a fragile lighthouse (*Pharos*, the lighthouse of Alexandria, 563), ill-suited to its mistress Minerva (569-70).[167] The image of the Pharos is also used by Statius as a metaphor for poetic achievement, in a passage which in turn alludes to Horace's claim that his poetry will tower above the Pyramids:

> tu Pelusiaci scelus Canopi
> deflebis pius et Pharo cruenta
> Pompeio dabis altius sepulchrum.
>
> Statius, *Silvae* 2.7.70-72.[168]

The literary monuments of the human race are reduced to a fragile and tottering structure, barely able to keep its lamp aflame (68-70).

The poem ends with the Auricula's scorn for her modern name – *Auricula Ursi*, Bear's-Ear – which she attributes to contemporary barbarism. Whoever thought up such a name, she says, deserved not auriculae but ears, namely the asses' ears of King Midas, that *iudex cytharae ridiculus* ('laughable judge of the lyre', 584-586). Midas is explicitly ridiculed for his ineptitude as arbiter of poetry; by implication, then, the modern age is equally devoid of critical judgement. In her scorn for human achievement, in both the writing and the reading of poetry, the Auricula advances a vehement claim for the superiority of the poetry of nature. As such, it is tempting to align her case with the eco-critical strand in modern scholarship that identifies a privileging of the beauty of primeval nature over human achievement, and to see in the poem an exhortation to disappear into a quasi-Edenic or Golden Age world of 'nature's book'.[169] Militating against such a reading, however, is Auricula's emphasis on her utility and her *virtus* (564, 567). Human endeavour may be feeble, but much of the Auricula's merit lies in her ability to prop it up.

5.3 Delusions of Grandeur

Violet and Auricula base their respective claims to the crown on their literary and pharmaceutical utility. Other plants rely instead on their appearance or their lineage. This contrast had particular piquancy in the 1660s, when the restored monarchy was still feeling its way towards a new definition and legitimation of kingship after the regicide had made it impossible unquestioningly to accept the old tradition of rule by divine right.[170] In *Plantarum* 3-

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[167] Gerard: 'the roote is amongst them [Alpine peoples] in great request, for the strengthning of the head, that when they are on the tops of places that are high, giddines and the swimming of the braine may not afflict them' (Gerard 1597: 643).
[168] See Newlands 2011, *ad loc*.
[169] McColley 2007: 109-131. Andrew McRae writes that Marvell's 'The Garden' 'dares to imagine a world in which even structures of symbolism give way to the essential qualities of plants themselves' (McRae 2011: 128).
[170] See e.g Sawday 1992: 180: 'The dense weight of protective rhetoric, with its hyperbolic claims to the quasi-divine status of the monarch, which had surrounded Charles I and the court culture of the 1630s is no longer applicable.' See also Maguire 1992: 138-145.

4, the depiction of kingship is frequently ambivalent or even hostile, in marked contrast to the conventions of Caroline masque.

Speaking immediately after the militaristic Hellebore, Violet expresses her contempt for the trappings of monarchy:

> Regio quamvìs veneranda cultu,
> Regios odi tumidósque fastus,
> Nec sinum amplexúmque humilis Parentis
> Impia sperno.
>
> Although worthy of reverence in royal homage,
> I hate royal and overblown pride,
> And the bosom and embrace of my lowly parent
> I do not impiously despise.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.495-498.
> *Translation: Victoria Moul*.

With Tulip, the ambivalence towards kingship becomes even more pointed. Tulip proudly lays claim to the role of monarch on the grounds of her splendid attire:

> Ornet divitior copia principem,
> Ornet lautities ambitiosior;
> *Regem* Pompa decet splendida; Parcitas
> *Vectigal* malè sordidum est.
>
> Let a richer abundance adorn a prince, let a more ambitious finery adorn him; splendid pomp befits a king; frugality is a meanly vile tribute.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.777-780.

The portrait of an extravagantly-dressed, prodigious monarch perhaps comes uncomfortably close to home with the description of the plant's aphrodisiac qualities (above, p.125). At the opening of book 4, the authorial voice provides a trio of illustrations which all contrast the apparently enviable role of monarch with the true good fortune of country life: Virgil's old man of Corycia, whose rustic self-sufficiency equals the wealth of kings (*Georgics* 4.132); Abdolominus, reluctantly leaving his farm to rule the kingdom of Sidon; and Aglaus, the poor and hard-working farmer who is nonetheless deserving of the envy of kings (*invidia regum dignissimus*, *Plantarum* 4.39).

Perhaps the best example of the puncturing of regal pretension is the showy Crown Imperial. Speaking in the *numero graviore* (680) of Alcaics, Crown Imperial claims that the contest is pointless: she already possesses the orb, sceptre and crown, given to her by Nature – even though she was unknown to the Greeks and Romans. The ode concludes with the flower boasting that the envious Aether acquired Ariadne's crown in a futile attempt to compete with the plant's splendour:

> Invidit Aether, me aspiciens, humo;
> Clarámque stellis obtinuit novem
> *Minoidos* pulchrae *Coronam*.
> Debet adhùc tamen invidere.

> Looking at me, Heaven envied the earth, and took possession of the crown of the beautiful daughter of Minos, bright with its nine stars. But still she should feel envy.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.721-724.

Her speech finished, Crown Imperial salutes Flora *quasi diva deam* ('as one goddess to another', 726).

The overall tone of the poem is humorous, with numerous indications in the text that the plant's claims are not to be taken at face value. She is introduced as being endowed with excessive pride (674); she walks with a gait whose nobility surpasses both gods and tragic iambi (675-676). She is scornful of the contest, regarding its outcome as fixed, and dismissing classical ancestry as an embarrassment:

> traho originem
> Nullis pudendam fabulosis
> Aut pueris superum aut puellis
>
> I do not trace an embarrassing descent from any mythical boyfriends or girlfriends of the gods.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.694-696.[171]

Her claim to victory rests on her possession of the trappings of royalty rather than on any actual merit; she compares herself to an Eastern monarch (697-700) and, startlingly, to the Pope – both highly negative figures to a mainstream English readership:

> nec mihi sat placet
> Regalis ornatus Supremae
> Pontifici Locupletis Horti.
>
> Nor is kingly adornment enough to satisfy me, Supreme Pontiff of the wealthy garden.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.718-720.

Finally, there is the matter of her unpleasant smell, which Cowley introduces with a witty echo of Virgil's Dido: Crown Imperial would be *nimium felix*, were it not for her rank odour (3.727-728).[172] For all her regal appearance and grandiose demeanour, Crown Imperial confers nothing on her potential subjects other than a faecal smell. And, by extension, a monarch must transcend the outward trappings and be of actual benefit to his people if he is to be worthy of the name.

The new vision of monarchy is developed most fully in book 4, in the paired poems on Sunflower (*Flos Solis*, 4.830-855) and Gillyflower (*Flos Iovis*, 4.860-887). Sunflower's claim rests on his status as Apollo's son; Gillyflower boasts of his descent from Jupiter, his value as a tonic for the heart, and of the sumptuous variety of his flowers. Significantly, in

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[171] The echo here of the *virginibus puerisque* of *Odes* 3.1, also in Alcaics, serves to underline the enormity of the Crown Imperial's contempt for the classical tradition.

[172] *Aeneid* 4.657-8: *felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum/numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae.* The Crown Imperial does indeed possess a pungent and powerful smell, as noted by Parkinson: 'the whole plant and every part thereof, as well roots, as leaves and flowers, do smell somewhat strong as it were the savour of a Fox' (Parkinson 1629: 28).

Flora's final verdict, Gillyflower is appointed praetor of the summer: lineage (Sunflower) and regal apparatus (Crown Imperial) are of limited value if they are not combined with a genuine utility.

But the two poems also stand in a complex intertextual relationship to Horace, and to Fanshawe's versions of Horace, which sharpens their relevance to Restoration political thought. That they are envisaged as a pair is demonstrated by their titles: while *Flos Solis* was the standard name for the Sunflower, the Gillyflower was known by a wide range of names – as Cowley himself points out, in a footnote which virtually translates Parkinson word for word.[173] He explains that he has chosen to use the name *Flos Iovis* as bestowing more honour (*honorificentius*) than the rest, even though it is not clear whether the plant was known to the Greeks and Romans (note 13, on 4.860). The flower of the sun, symbol of monarchy, is paired with the flower of the king of the gods. Metrically, too, the poems form a pair. Both are in epodic metres: Sunflower in pythiambics (dactylic hexameter plus iambic trimeter), Gillyflower in the First Archilochean (distychs of a dactylic hexameter followed by a dactylic tetrameter catalectic). Horace uses pythiambics only in *Epode* 16, the First Archilochean in *Odes* 1.7 and 28 and in the obscenely invective *Epode* 12.

Epode 16 is one of the Horatian poems translated by Fanshawe in his 1648 volume, the other being *Odes* 3.24.[174] Both are grimly pessimistic poems, the former deploring the years of civil war and urging emigration to the Isles of the Blessed, the latter excoriating human greed. In 'The Civil Wars of Rome', which forms part of the same volume, Fanshawe puts a literal gloss on the *Epode*:

> The Poet now *despair[s] of the fortune of the Common-wealth* to that degree as to think nothing of going to a *Plantation* in the second of the fore-going *Odes* [i.e. *Epode* 16].
>
> Fanshawe, 'The Civil Wars of Rome', p.316.

Eight years later, Cowley expressed a similar sentiment in the Preface to *Poems*:

> [...] my desire has been for some years past (though the execution has been accidentally diverted) and does stil vehemently continue, to retire my self to some of our American Plantations, not to seek for Gold, or inrich my self with the traffique of those parts (which is the end of most men that travel thither; so that of these Indies it is truer then it was of the former,

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[173] *Caryophyllus sativus Maior, Angl.* Gilloflowers*, quasi Iulii Flores.* Maximus*,* Carnations*, variis nominibus a diversis autoribus indigitantur, Vetonica Altera, Vet. Altilis, Vet. Coronaria, Herba Tunica Viola Damascena, Ocellus Damascenus. Cantabrica* Plinii*, Iphium* Theophrasti*, &* διὸς ἄνθος*, Flos Iovis ('Caryophyllus sativus Major, in English Gillowflowers, as though Flowers of July. The greatest, Carnations, are denoted with various names by different authors, Vetonica Altera, Vetonica Altilis, Vetonica Coronaria, Herba Tunica, Viola Damascena, Ocellus Damascenus, Cantabrica Plinii, Iphium Theophrasti and Dios Anthos, Flos Iovis*, note 13, on 4.860). Compare Parkinson: 'Most of our late Writers do call them by one general name, Caryophyllus sativus, and flos Caryophylleus, adding thereunto maximus, when we mean Carnations, and major, when we would expresse Gilloflowers ... Divers other severall names have been formerly given them, as Vetonica, or Betonica altera, or Vetonica altilis, and coronaria, Herba Tunica, Viola Damascena, Ocellus Damascenus, and Barbaricus'. Of some Cantabrica Plinii. Some think they were unknown to the Ancients, and some would have them to be Iphium of Theophrastus ... others to be his Dios anthos, or Iovis flos' (Parkinson 1629: 134).

[174] Other seventeenth-century translations of *Epode* 16 include those by Sir Thomas Hawkins (Hawkins 1625) and Henry Rider (Rider 1638). On these and on Horatian translation generally in this period, see Scodel 2010: 212-220.

> *Improbus extremos currit Mercator ad Indos*
> *Pauperiem fugiens*---)
> But to forsake this world for ever, with all the *vanities* and *Vexations* of it, and to bury my self in some obscure retreat there (but not without the consolation of *Letters* and *Philosophy*) [...]
> *Poems*, sig. a3^{r-v}.[175]

For Fanshawe, then, *Epode* 16 represents the desire to leave a land ravaged by civil war, in much the same way as the wish expressed by Cowley. Read in this light, 'Sunflower' has more in common with the Horatian model than simply its metre. The Sunflower emphasises its golden appearance; Horace's citizens are to abandon an age of iron for a golden one. Horace will sail the Ocean to seek the fields of the blessed and islands of riches (*Epode* 16.41-42); Sunflower is native to the Americas, and rules over the world of gold (*Plantarum* 4.853).

Cowley's yellow sunflower is closely identified with the gold of coinage: it is a 'living currency which bears the image of Apollo (*vivam monetam*, *imagine impressam sua*, 855). As book 5 will show, this identification is a problematic one. While the indigenous inhabitants of the New World trade with the *vera pecunia* of the edible and renewable cocoa bean (5.902), the European invaders lay waste the land through greed for useless gold (5.902-906).[176] In identifying himself with a golden coin, Sunflower paradoxically aligns himself not with his fellow-plant, the living and nourishing cocoa bean, but with the inert metal which is to prove so destructive. In doing so, he sets himself up as a lure to the *improbus mercator* of the Horatian allusion in the Preface to *Poems*. The particular brand of wealth that he offers has little of real value to commend it.

Similarly, Fanshawe implicitly praises Horace for resisting the urge to emigrate, showing how he was rewarded with the arrival of happier times:

> This same despairing *Horace* did live to see, and particularly to enjoy, other very different *times*, when the Common-wealth, after the defeat of *Mark Anthony* at the Battel of *Actium*, *being now quite tyred out with Civil Wars*, *submitted her self to the just and peaceful Scepter of the most noble* Augustus.
> Fanshawe, 'The Civil Wars of Rome', pp. 316-7.

Horace's own text suggests that the voyage was never a realistic prospect. His destination is described in terms of the conventional Golden Age, as a land which bears crops without being ploughed, where the flocks need no shepherding, a land without snakes (*Epode* 16.43-56).[177] Fanshawe advocates endurance over emigration; Horace presents it as escapist fantasy. Read through these two predecessors, Sunflower's account of the golden lands of

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[175] Cowley quotes Horace, *Epistles* 1.1.43, substituting the stronger, and pejorative, improbus ('wicked') for Horace's impiger ('tireless').
[176] On this passage, see further p. 163.
[177] See Mankin 1995 ad loc; Fitzgerald 1988: 176.

America becomes similarly removed from reality. The realm of the Sunflower is not one which has any real bearing on the present situation.[178]

Flora's appointment of the Gillyflower as one of her praetors provides an endorsement of the flower's claim to power. However, ambiguities emerge when the ode is read alongside Horatian predecessors and Fanshawe's versions. Fanshawe's second Horace translation is *Odes* 3.24, a bitter condemnation of human greed and of the vanity of wealth, themes which are raised by 'Sunflower' and subsequently by Gillyflower, with the evident enjoyment with which he describes the wealth of colour in his abundant petals. Sunflower cannot really call himself wealthy, Gillyflower argues, because, like a poor man, he always wears the same clothes (873-876); with Gillyflower's many colours, he is richer than the rose, the anemone and the tulip – a Croesus of colours (877-881). However, Gillyflower's delight in his appearance is secondary to his celebration of his medicinal powers: Sunflower may please the eye with his golden colour, but he, Gillyflower, is a gold which gladdens the heart, a more abundant source of physic than the gold-bearing river Tagus, the riches of Peru, or even Jupiter himself in the guise of a shower of gold (865-71).[179]

It is in the light of Cowley's awareness of the changed nature of Restoration kingship that I believe we should read the section on Moly (4.515-657). Placed centrally in book 4 and narrated by Flora herself, this very puzzling passage is clearly an important one, though its significance is far from immediately clear. The tone of the passage is humorous, from the low comedy of Moly's garlic-scented belch (532-533) to the mock-epic description of the mole's attack on Flora's garden (622-645); its invocation of the forces of chaos in the person of the mole recalls the disorder of antimasque. The imminent shift in tone is heralded shortly before this section, when, at 465-468, Cowley alludes to the mythological tradition in which Flora was the name of a prostitute.[180] This is the Ovidian Flora of the *Fasti*, not the idealised Chloris/Flora of Jonsonian masque.

Moly is the name given both to the mystical plant of *Odyssey* 10 and to *Allium moly*, a plant of the onion family. It is this latter plant who lays claim to the title of queen of the flowers, based on the Homeric identification (4.509-519). Unfortunately, her lowly origins are apparent in the malodorous eructation which ends her speech, much to the amusement of

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[178] By introducing *Epode* 16, with its satirically pessimistic presentation of Golden Age imagery, Cowley allows his depiction of country life to become tinged with ambiguity. Furthermore, given 16's structural pairing with *Epode* 2, its presence in the text admits the possibility of irony in allusions to the earlier poem.

[179] This claim to surpass his father contrasts with Sunflower, who boasts of being the image of his father Apollo, and has evident bearing on the figuring of the relation of Charles II to his father Charles I. Syrithe Pugh has observed how the first poem in Fanshawe's 1648 volume, 'Presented to His Highnesse the Prince of Wales, At his going into the West, Anno M. DC. XLV. Together with Cesar's Commentaries', emphasises a separation between the then-prince and his father, encouraging the heir to take a course of action divergent from that of his father. The Sunflower and Gillyflower poems seem to urge Charles not to be Phaethon to his father's Apollo but rather to strive for an emulation which can outrank his father.

[180] Lactantius, *Institutiones Divinae* 1.20.1; Kilgour 2004: 5-6.

the assembled company (4.532-535). Cowley's footnote explains that the modern moly bears no resemblance to the plant of the *Odyssey*, which he believes to have been entirely mythical (note 1, on 507). This humorous poetic elaboration of a botanic trope is given a surprising twist when Flora herself begins to speak (4.548). In a story which appears to be Cowley's own invention, she explains that the *Allium moly* is unrelated to the moly of legend, which was metamorphosed into a marble column after the gods became alarmed by its power (548-583). She then tells of a different plant, the phoenix, or date palm, which enabled Juno to conceive Mars parthenogenetically (584-607).[181] Flora's attempts to propagate this plant alarmed Jupiter, who decided to act pre-emptively, as he had in the case of moly (608-621). Just as a bulblet began to take shape beside the main plant, Jupiter sent a diabolical mole, who dug up Flora's garden, destroying the plant in the process (622-647). Flora concludes by urging Moly to be content with its lowly status and not risk provoking divine envy (648-655).

The phoenix bird has a very rich symbolic pedigree, representing immortality, virginity, resurrection, and singularity, as well as royalty.[182] It is the child of Apollo, consumed, like Apollo's son Phaethon, by the rays of the sun, but – unlike Phaethon – reborn from the ashes of its predecessor.[183] Crucially, the identity of the dead phoenix with its successor became an emblem of monarchic succession and the concept of *dignitas quae non moritur*.[184] A medal struck in 1649, depicting Charles I on the obverse and a phoenix representing his son on the reverse, is indicative of the currency of this strand of imagery in mid-seventeenth-century England; its survival well into the Restoration is demonstrated by the polemicist John Nalson:

> [...] the King of England is Immortal: and the young Phoenix stays not to rise from the spicy ashes of the old one but the Soul of Royalty by a kind of Metempsychosis passes immediately out of one body into another.
>
> John Naslon, *The Common Interest of King & People*. [185]

However, Cowley's phoenix is not explicitly the mythical bird, but a plant, probably to be identified with the classical *phoenix*, or date palm. The ancients knew that the tree reproduced sexually and it is for this reason that the palm is an emblem of marital fidelity as well as of victory.[186] In this context, its identification by Cowley as the plant used by Juno for the conception of Mars can be understood as a form of sexual reproduction in which the plant fulfils the male role. Cowley blends the phoenix bird's association with succession together with the plant's association with reproduction, generating an allegory of the Stuart dynasty: through the gestation and nurturing of Flora/Henrietta Maria, the phoenix/monarch

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[181] The story is found only in Ovid (*Fasti* 5.229-560), where the plant is not named.
[182] Kantorowicz 1957: 387-395; Revard 1997: 230-234.
[183] Ovid, Amores 2.6.54; *Metamorphoses* 15.393-407; Lactantius, *De Ave Phoenice*; Claudian, 'Phoenix.'
[184] Kantorowicz 1957: 391-394.
[185] Nalson 1677. Coincidentally, the ship on which Charles sailed for France in March 1645 was called the *Phoenix*.
[186] Pliny, *NH* 13.7. The appearance of the palm tree at the end of Callipolis carries both associations.

reproduces itself in the regal body of Juno.[187] In emphasising the female role, the image serves as a reminder to Charles II of the importance of the queen in ensuring dynastic survival.

In contrast to the mythical conception of Mars, however, Flora attempts to propagate the plant itself by purely horticultural means, encouraging a bulblet to grow at its base. But to no avail: in a mock-epic reprise of the rampaging boar in the Wars of the Roses digression at the end of book 3 (1108-1115) the plant is destroyed in its entirety by the pernicious mole sent by an envious Jupiter. In a second, different, metaphor of dynastic monarchy, the Stuart succession is literally uprooted by a vindictive deity who sends the carnage of the civil war not as an act of punishment but out of sheer jealousy. The queen is reduced to a nursery gardener, fretting about the damage to her prize (and priceless) tulips, but determined to put a brave face on things (632-639).[188] The destruction of the plant and its tender bulblet growing at its base reveals the model for the succession of Charles II to be not the mystical self-immolation and regeneration of the phoenix but rather the constitutional settlement of Flora's court. In the midst of a discussion as to the nature of and qualifications for kingship, the story of Flora's garden and the mole provides an illustration of what it is not. Moreover, both models of reproduction echo the growing anxieties over the succession in the face of the queen's childlessness and the king's conspicuous infidelities.[189]

With its tone of comic burlesque, the episode functions as an anti-masque, which, as Maguire has shown, survived into the Restoration in the genre of divided tragicomedy, where 'higher' and 'lower' plots enabled conflicting narratives and world-views to be presented simultaneously: 'Within this uncertain and insecure culture, the crashing polarities of regicide and restoration, idealism and pragmatism, past and present, security and instability, demanded a genre which allowed multiple perspectives, which tolerated a sense of change and flux, and which encouraged experimentation.'[190] I argued in chapter 1 for the importance of themes of transformation and change in Cowley's Ovidianism: with his treatment of the phoenix, he points to Pythagoras' great speech in *Metamorphoses* 15, where the phoenix represents what Maggie Kilgour has called 'the kind of redundant and static change that makes real change impossible.'[191] Kilgour continues: 'The son who *is* his own father suggests that present and future are simply copies of the past, without progression or difference. The phoenix family is a fantasy of narcissistic self-perpetuation through identical images "like

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[187] Plant and bird also come together in the Old Testament Book of Job, where the Hebrew word *chol* is read as 'phoenix' in the rabbinical tradition. It is translated as φοινιξ (phoenix or palm tree) by the Septuagint and *palma* by the Vulgate; 'palm tree' by the King James Bible. See McDonald 1960: 189-192.
[188] While tulip bulbs no longer commanded the price they had enjoyed during the Tulipmania in the 1630s, they remained a high-value item. Maguire 1992: 139-140 identifies an association of the commercial with Restoration pragmatism.
[189] Similar concerns have been observed in the Identification of Catherine with the childless Berenice in Dryden's Tyrannick Love (1669). See Maguire 1992: 204; Garganigo 2003: 489.
[190] Maguire 1993: 42.
[191] Kilgour 2012: 310-311.

itself".' The destruction of the phoenix in *Plantarum* 4 is, paradoxically, an image of hope, an indication that, with the Restoration, comes not a replication of Charles I but rather a genuine constitutional metamorphosis.

Nonetheless, as in the case of the *Pindariques* and of *PLD* (above, pp. 55-56), Cowley's Moly episode resists neat allegorical resolution. While the association of the phoenix with the Stuart dynasty, together with Cowley's emphasis on Flora's efforts to propagate the plant, strongly invite a reading in terms of monarchical succession, the passage is ambiguous as to whether the plant itself represents the successful procreation of Charles I or the failed attempts of Charles II. While the strongly celebratory tone of the Restoration setting of books 3-4 ultimately suggests the Royalist allegory outlined above, Cowley characteristically leaves open the possibility of an alternative, darker, reading.

6 Conclusion

Love's Triumph Through Callipolis ended with the mystical emblem of the palm tree and the imperial crown intertwined with roses and lilies. By the end of *Plantarum* 4, the palm tree has been dug up by a mole, the crown imperial banished on account of its offensive smell, and the rose and lily appointed consuls in the new republic of the flowers. Given the usual association of Cowley's Restoration poetry with panegyric of the most fulsome kind, this imagery reveals a startling degree of iconoclasm. However, comparison with Fanshawe's *Il Pastor Fido* volume has shown that the cautious advocacy of limited monarchy could be compatible with overt and committed Royalist affiliations. Moreover, with a degree of equivocation characteristic both of Cowley and of Restoration poets in general, *Plantarum* 5 and 6 will present a vision of a new Golden Age and a second Roman Empire, in which the dynastic symbol of the Phoenix is replaced by the Stuart oak.

Chapter Three: 'The two last speak of Trees'[1]

Mapping the Forest in *Plantarum* 5-6

In the final two books of the *Plantarum*, Cowley moves from elegiac and lyric metres to the hexameter, and from herbs and flowers to trees. A contest in book 5 between trees of the Old and New Worlds, which closes with a prophecy of the rise of America, is followed by an assembly of English trees and a narrative of the Civil War and Restoration. Virgil, whose voice thus far has been more muted than those of Ovid and Horace, steps into the foreground, providing an important intertext both for the catalogues of trees and for the historical narrative. These books have received more scholarly attention than the remainder of the work, with discussion focused both on the Civil War narrative and its relationship with Cowley's earlier, abandoned, English epic *The Civil War*, and on the interest of the New World passages.[2]

Generically, thematically and intertextually, the final books are particularly rich and complex. I shall begin my discussion with book 5, looking first at the relationship with the *Georgics* and his use of the trees of the Old World as cultural signifiers, before considering Cowley's depiction of the New World, where the ambivalence of his use of the Golden Age trope provides a means of articulating the cost of technological and cultural progress. In section 4 of the chapter, I show how, in book 6, Cowley deploys the multiple significations of the forest in both classical and English literature in order to shape a vision of the Restoration which is both quintessentially British and the natural heir to the classical tradition. I then focus on the sophistication of Cowley's engagement with Virgil and Lucan in the epic narrative of the second half of book 6, closing the chapter with a comparison of the prophecies of Apollo and the Dryad which close books 5 and 6 respectively, showing how each can be read as foretelling the future glory of Britain under the Stuart dynasty.

1 *Plantarum* 5 and 6: outline of contents

For a detailed table, see the Appendix.[3]

The contents page to the 1668 edition of Poemata Latina describes books 5 and 6 of the Plantarum as *duo Sylvarum*; in the main text, book 5 is given the title *Pomona*, book 6 *Sylva*. Book 5 opens with an assertive declaration of generic ascent: Cowley announces his

[1] Sprat, *Life*, sig. c2^{v}.
[2] See Monreal 2010: 271-278; Moul, *EEBO Introductions*, Ludwig 1982: 151-180; Hofmann 1994: 626-632; Anselment 1988: 180-184; Scodel 2002: 138-141. Kinney 2007 is particularly rich in contemporary images.
[3] See also the outline in Monreal 2010: 278-284.

adoption of the elevated hexameter line and tragic mode and of the literally lofty subject of trees (1-6).

> Altiùs elatis insurgite Carmina talis
> Et pedis heroï gressum relevate Cothurno,
> Alta cano; *Gentem Arboream*, gentem aethere multo
> Vicinóque polo & *Phoebo* propiore beatam.
> Illa leves odit pulchellis Floribus aptos
> Despicit illa humiles & dignos Gramine Versus.

> Rise higher, my songs, with lifted heels, and raise your step with the buskin of the heroic foot – I sing of lofty matters: the race of trees, the race blessed with abundant air and the adjacent sky and a closer Phoebus. That race loathes verses which are light and suited to pretty little flowers, she despises those which are lowly and worthy of the green sward.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1-6.
> *Translation: Victoria Moul (with alterations).*

The emphasis on height, the reference to the heroic foot, and the allusion to the tragic actor's buskin all point the reader to the high style of epic, a feature which will be explored in greater depth in the third section of this chapter.[4]

Cowley proceeds to describe his setting: an island in the Atlantic blessed with a miraculously temperate climate (13-49). In a clear structural parallel with books 3-4, Cowley explains that it is October, and Pomona is holding her annual autumn festival, with a great banquet for the rural gods, including those from America (50-111). At the end of the feast, Omelochilus, the Western Bacchus, feeling that the produce of the New World is receiving insufficient recognition, calls a contest of fruit trees. (112-142).

As the contest begins, the fruit and nut trees of the Old World line up in a double column. First come the nuts: the hazel and the chestnut (164-220), the pine (221-249), the almond (250-275), and the pistachio and walnut (276-319). The fruits follow: the pomegranate (321-346), oranges and lemons (347-376), the cherry and other single-kernelled fruit (377-405), the plum, peach and apricot (406-437), the cornel (438-442), the jujube tree (443-446), the lotus (447-482), the palm (483-513), the olive (514-595), the medlar and myrtle (596-605), the apple and the pear (606-626), the quince (627-635), various berries (636-645), the mulberry (646-672), the fig (673-726) and finally the vine (727-782). Then the New World trees enter: the coca plant (798-834), the hovia (835-845), the plantain (846-858), the prickly pear (859-869), the tuna plant (870-877), the cocoa tree (878-906), the avocado (907-911), the agave (912-949) and the coconut (950-969).[5]

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[4] Epic colouring includes the catalogues of trees (*Plantarum* 5.155-782, 798-969; *Plantarum* 6.186-577: compare Homer, *Iliad* 2.494-759, Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.641-817, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.86-105); the Dryad's narrative of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration (*Plantarum* 6.578-1226); and the mock-epic battle between Old and New World gods (*Plantarum* 5.1006-1077).

[5] These plants are identified in Monreal 2010: 298-9. There are also helpful illustrations in Kinney 2007 (http://cowley.lib.virginia.edu/small/bk4country.htm). Cowley's main sources for Latin American botany seem to have been José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590; Quills 1998; first English translation Grimstone 1604) and Joannes de Laet's *Novus orbis* (1633). See Monreal 2010: 290; Bradner 1940: 121 n. 39.

While Pomona considers her verdict, a quarrel breaks out between Bacchus and Omelochilus, who have been drinking throughout.[6] When Omelochilus hits Bacchus in the face with a coconut shell, Bacchus responds in kind, and soon all the gods enter the affray (981-1030). Finally Apollo takes up his lyre and calms the gods, first with music alone and then with a song which recalls the song of creation (1031-1077). Beginning with the voyage of Columbus and the Spanish conquest, Apollo explains that Europe will be destroyed by greed for the gold plundered from the New World, until America, having learned the ways of civilisation from her conquerors, will become a safe haven for the arts and sciences as they abandon the ruins of Europe (1078-1191). Eventually America's wealth will return to her, and the Fates will establish a great empire (1192-1200).

Plantarum 6 opens with Cowley's invocation to his Muse and the Hamadryads as he makes his way into a dense forest, forbidden even to Apollo, where the poet promises to plant an oak tree as a throne for Charles II (1-39).[7] Lines 40-152 locate the narrative in the halcyon days of Charles I's reign and describe the grim portents of the civil strife that is to come. 153-183 describe the Forest of Dean, its resources of timber and iron ore woefully depleted, where the Dryad summons a meeting of forest nymphs, who attend in the guise of trees.

Next comes a catalogue of the trees who attend: the poplar, alder and willow (186-199), the elder (200-209), the birch (200-219), the maple (220-227), the hornbeam (228-30), the elm (231-233), the beech (234-249), the ash (250-255), the lime (256-266), the wood-pear and crab-apple (267-268), the sorb-apple, barberry, cornel, walnut, hazel and chestnut (269-75), the hawthorn (276-297), the blackthorn, the bramble and the dog rose (298-301), the box tree (307-330), the holly, arbutus, privet and pyracantha (331-348), the yew (349-366), the juniper and savin (367-377), the cypress (378-398), the laurel (399-416), and the fir and pine (417-434). The catalogue closes with a celebration of the oak tree, which includes an account of the Golden Age and the Fall (435-557), a eulogy of the oak's provision of timber for maritime trade and defence (478-532), and a celebration of the importance of the tree in Druidic cult (533-557).

The Dryad begins to speak at 558. She attributes her powers of prophecy to her descent from the sacred oak of Dodona, via an acorn planted by Brutus, the legendary Trojan ancestor of the Britons (566-629). She then utters a lengthy prophecy of the Civil War and regicide (630-737), the ravages of the Interregnum (748-816), the Battle of Worcester and escape of Charles II (817-1019) and the Restoration (1029-1088). After issuing advice on government to the restored monarch (1090-1125), she closes with a prophecy of the victory

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[6] Cowley uses the titles Bacchus, Iacchus, Lenaeus and Bromius interchangeably. In lines 990-1010, Lenaeus (990), Bromius (1003) and Bacchus (1006) all refer to the same character; the Iacchus who offers a wine-skin to Omelochilus at 785-787 is surely to be identified with Cowley's quarrelsome wine-god.

[7] See Moul, *EEBO Introductions*.

over the Dutch in the Battle of Lowestoft of 1665 (1126-1226). In a short coda (1227-1230), the poet remarks on the many marvels still to come, which will be celebrated by future – and better – poets.

This final pair of books is especially rich in generic, thematic, topographical and intertextual range. The combination of historical narrative and political comment with botanical detail forms a startling juxtaposition. Cowley brings these disparate elements together using the various metaphorical and allegorical possibilities of trees: as repositories of myth and legend often tied to national identity; as metaphors for text and poetic process; as symbols of political leaders; and as sources of timber, the *materia* of technological, commercial and military progress.

2 Ancient and modern in Cowley's forest

2.1 The *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in Plantarum 5-6

In the summary of the *Plantarum* included in Sprat's *Life* and quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, books 5 and 6 are described as being 'in the way of Virgils *Georgics*.'[8] Certainly, the opening of book 5 (above, pp. 158-159) explicitly signals its move to the hexameter and its theme of trees, the *alta cano* of line 3 contrasting with the *infima regna cano* which formed the first words of *Plantarum* 1. This newly-elevated subject matter is strongly identified with the shift from flowers to trees.

However, what precisely is signified by this generic shift is not immediately apparent. With *alta cano*, Cowley immediately evokes the opening of *Eclogue* 4 (*paulo maiora cano*). But Virgil's emphasis is rather different from Cowley's. For Virgil, his theme of *silvae* belongs to the pastoral genre of *arbusta [...] humilesque myricae* (*Eclogue* 4.2): he elevates it by treating *silvae [...] consule dignae* (3). The prophecy of a birth which will restore the Golden Age is thus presented as pastoral, the province of the *Sicelides Musae* (1), albeit in a more elevated form. For Cowley, the subject of trees *per se* indicates a generic ascent, strengthened by the heroic foot of the hexameter (*Plantarum* 5.2). The reader appears to be directed towards the *Aeneid* rather than to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, all the more so given that what actually follows is a focus on the properties of trees and the myths attached to them, not on their cultivation, while the major digressions of the prophecies which close each book are given a distinctly epic flavour by their stories of colonisation and conquest.

Sprat's identification of the importance of the *Georgics* to *Plantarum* 5 and 6 is nonetheless intelligible in terms of the way that Virgil's poem was read during the Renaissance. As such, *Plantarum* 5-6 are 'in the way of Virgil's *Georgics*' in the sense identified by David Scott Wilson-Okamura and Alastair Fowler, who argue that Early Modern

[8] Sprat, *Life*, sig. c2^{v}.

readings of the *Georgics* went considerably beyond 'labor and the plow,' the defining characteristics typically identified by scholars of English literature of the period.[9] Fowler identifies an 'unfocused' georgic defined as 'a digressive poem containing precepts, instruction in an art, or meditation on the good life', which 'might touch on labor and the retired life of the country; comparison of historical periods; seasonal change; or landscape description. And it was spoken in the poet's own person.'[10] This looser conception of 'georgic' enables Fowler to include within the genre both the estate poem, notably Jonson's 'To Sir Robert Wroth' and Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House'; and topographical poems including Denham's 'Cooper's Hill' and Waller's 'On St. James' Park', as well as Cowley's own translations from Horace and Virgil in the *Essays*. Apollo's prophecy in *Plantarum* 5 and the long narrative of recent history in *Plantarum* 6 can be comfortably accommodated to a concept of georgic which, like Fowler's, sees digressions such as the Orpheus and Eurydice epyllion of *Georgics* 4 as a defining feature of the genre. Wilson-Okamura similarly rejects husbandry as the defining characteristic of the genre for the Renaissance reader, arguing instead that it was the direct communication of knowledge and the variety of content and style that distinguished the 'georgic' from narrative epic.[11]

In this broader context of 'georgic', Sprat's description of books 5 and 6 of the *Plantarum* can more readily be understood. Of a total of 2430 lines, 814 lines of book 5 and 391 of book 6 directly concern trees; the poet establishes himself as the primary speaker with first-person verbs at the beginning of both books and at the end of book 6; the historical scene-setting of the beginning of 6 and the Civil War narrative of the book's second half is recognisable as Fowler's 'comparison of historical periods'. Moreover, in Cowley's treatment of pre-conquest America and his handling of the trope of the Golden Age, he regularly juxtaposes a primitive rural existence with modern urbanisation.

Narrative epic and pastoral also play a part in Cowley's georgic.[12] Like the Forest of Dean in book 6, the *paysage* of Virgil's *Eclogues* is wooded, and inhabited by rural divinities who prefigure the dryads and nymphs of *Plantarum* 6.[13] Virgil's Tityrus, reclining under the beech tree at the opening of *Eclogue* 1, reappears in Cowley's section on the beech, where shepherds are encouraged to follow Tityrus' example and while away the heat of the day with song (*Plantarum* 6.234-238). Moreover, as I shall discuss in greater detail below, Cowley describes the Golden Age of the restored Stuart monarchy in terms strongly evocative of *Eclogue* 4.

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[9] A. Fowler 1986: 105-125; Wilson-Okamura 2010: 77-100. For readings of 'georgic' literature as primarily concerned with the detail of agriculture and husbandry, see e.g. Low 1985: 13-34; Scodel 2002: 79-89; Preston 2015: 201-209.
[10] A. Fowler 1986: 111.
[11] Wilson-Okamura: 82, 92-93.
[12] Virgilian and Lucanian epic will be discussed in Part 5 of this chapter.
[13] Woods: Clausen 1994: xxvi-xxvii. Rural divinities: the nymphs weeping for Daphnis in *Eclogue* 5.20-23; the naiad and Silenus in *Eclogue* 6, and the two boys who may or may not be satyrs. See Casanova-Robin 2014: ad loc.; Clausen 1994: ad loc.

In the landscape of Virgil's *Eclogues* a highly allusive literary discourse is assertively and strikingly juxtaposed with contemporary political and social realities, a stylised Arcadia colliding with an Italy ravaged by civil war.[14] Cowley achieves a similarly startling juxtaposition at the opening of book 6, where the recent past is thrust into an apparently literary forest. The poet invites his Muse to accompany him into a veritable *selva oscura*, using imagery of hunting, exploration and investigation which strongly imply that this is a metaphorical forest, a place for the tracking-down of the didactic poet's body of knowledge. Yet into this literary landscape is inserted the contemporary figure of Charles II, concealed in the Boscobel oak:

> Sed neque te pudeat *Pomaria* ditia *Sylvis*
> Pauperibus mutasse; Habitarunt Numina Sylvas,
> Forsàn & hic habitent. Habitavit proximus illis
> *Carolides*, nemoris dono tutatus opaci
> Augustum caput, & nulli violabile Parcae:

> But don't be ashamed that you've exchanged rich orchards for impoverished woodlands. Divine powers have dwelt in woods, and perhaps they dwell here too. Most recently there dwelt there Charles' son, his august head protected by the gift of the shady grove, and inviolable to any Fate.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.13-17.
> *Translation: Victoria Moul (with alterations)*

The forest itself is given a firmly seventeenth-century, and highly topical, setting when Cowley locates his meeting of tree-spirits in the Forest of Dean (153-157), whose ruthless plundering by the notorious Sir John Winter had formed a recent *cause célèbre*.[15]

Scholarship on Early Modern English pastoral and georgic has tended to insist on a clear separation of the two genres. Central to this separation is the perception of an opposition of an aristocratic enjoyment of an idealised pastoral idyll versus georgic's emphasis on the hard manual labour of agriculture.[16] On these readings, Cowley has been regarded as a georgic pioneer, with his insistence on the value of agricultural labour and expertise.[17] In *Plantarum* 6, for example, he is not afraid to compare Charles II's task in rebuilding the nation with the unremitting toil of the farmer:

> Talis cura occupat Horti
> Squallentis *reducem Dominum*; senta omnia visu
> Horridáque offendit; sed luxuriantia cautâ
> Falce premit, deiecta levat, religátque soluta,
> Multa serit, multa extirpat, novat omnia cultu,
> Immensum sed dulce opus est, omnémque coloni
> Paulatim recreat crescente Decore Laborem.

> This is the responsibility which takes hold of the returning master of an overgrown garden, when he comes upon it all thorny and bristly to behold, but he prunes the luxuriant growth with a careful sickle, raises what is on the ground and ties up what has come loose, sows much, uproots much, renews everything with husbandry. The task is huge, but pleasant, and little by little he recreates all the work of the farmer as its beauty grows.

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[14] See e.g. Casanova-Robin 2014: xx-xxi.
[15] Schama 1995: 156-158; Theis 2009: 167-168; Arponen 2012: 10-12.
[16] See e.g. R. Williams 1973: 23-34; Low 1985: 222-254.
[17] 'Of Agriculture', from *Essays* (sig. N2^{r}).

Plantarum 6.1096-1102.[18]

This sharp distinction has, however, been challenged by a broadening of the genre of georgic which has generated a more nuanced approach both to georgic itself and to the related genre of pastoral. Annabel Patterson has shown how allusion to the *Georgics* can be an exhortation to intellectual contemplation, and how the *Eclogues* may be cited in an unexpectedly scientific context.[19] Andrew Wallace has demonstrated the importance of both *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in providing pedagogical models in Early Modern England, where both texts were central to the grammar school curriculum.[20] Both Patterson and Jeffrey Theis have observed how the *otium* of pastoral can be interrupted by human labour, a process which, for Theis, represents a statement of agency, an assertion by the writer of a claim upon the landscape which in turn argues for the ability of literature to enact change.[21] This melding of a pastoral landscape with georgic *labor* provides a fruitful means of reading *Plantarum* 5-6: in the servitude of the Amerindians and in the transformation of the English forest into the ships that form vehicles of war and commerce, Cowley explores the positive and negative effects of human agency and *labor* on the very different landscapes of England and America.

2.2 Forest and Culture: Trees in *Plantarum* 5

The procession of Old World trees in the first half of *Plantarum* 5 is above all a parade of European culture, a display of all that the Old World has to offer the New.[22] In its form, it echoes the list of trees in *Metamorphoses* 10.86-142 who assemble through the power of Orpheus' song, and allusions to the classical literary tradition generate a strong emphasis on the importance of poetry. This classical emphasis is heightened by the choice of species: whereas in book 6 Cowley focuses on British trees, the catalogue in 5 includes such exotics as the jujube tree and the lotos (5.443-480), and the trees singled out for the most detailed treatment are the Mediterranean staples of the olive (514-595), the fig (673-726) and the vine (727-782).[23]

Engagement with Ovid is underlined by the prominence in the opening lines of the *aesculus* and the Dodona oak (*Metamorphoses* 10.90-91; *Plantarum* 5.155-163). Further allusion to *Metamorphoses* 10 can be found in the account of the pine tree, the metamorphosed Attis (5.221-590) and the long supporting footnote referencing Ovid (and

[18] With the phrase *horti squallentis*, Cowley gives an explicit steer towards Virgil's *squalent arva* at *Georgics* 1.507, and to the classical poet's depiction of an agricultural landscape devastated by civil war.
[19] Patterson 1988: 134-138.
[20] A. Wallace: 2010: 29-34, chs. 2-3.
[21] Patterson 1988: 154-156; Theis 2009: 161-163.
[22] Cowley's repeated use of Greek names for the trees in book 6 similarly serves as a reminder of the length and richness of the classical tradition. See Appendix, Table 6.
[23] Both trees strengthen the connection between trees and culture: the jujube tree provides wood for the lyre (5.446), and the lotus for the flute (474-482).

hence privileging the Ovidian version over Catullus 63).[24] Ovid reappears in the section on the almond tree (250-275), in which Cowley tells how Ia and Phyllis were both turned into almond trees: while the story of the metamorphosis of Ia is not Ovidian, she is keyed to the *Metamorphoses* as daughter of Midas (*Metamorphoses* 11); the tale of Phyllis is familiar from *Heroides* 2. The section on the olive alludes to the Athenian foundation myth depicted in Athena's tapestry in *Metamorphoses* 6.5-145, where the goddess' gift of the olive is preferred to Poseidon's horse (*Plantarum* 517-538); Pyramus and Thisbe (*Metamorphoses* 4.56-166) are alluded to in the account of the mulberry (*Plantarum* 5.661).

The allusive texture of the entire catalogue is particularly rich. Echoes of Horace are less prominent than those of Ovid, but there is clear allusion to the *Odes* at two important moments. In the section on the palm tree (*Plantarum* 5.483-513), when the palm, symbol of victory, is described as inserting its head into the heavens (*coelo pulchrum caput inserit alto*, 501) – an echo of Horace's prayer in *Odes* 1.1 (a poem which begins with a palm tree):

> quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres
> sublimi feriam sidera vertice.
>
> Horace, *Odes* 1.1.35-6.

Cowley's passage on the vine is indebted to Horace's treatment of poetic inspiration in the hymn to Bacchus at *Odes* 3.25.

The catalogue is, however, underpinned throughout by allusion to the *Georgics*. The opening reference to the *aesculus* recalls Virgil as well as Ovid, via *Georgics* 2.16 and 291; the huge shadow of the chestnut (*late sylvestrem porrigit umbram*, *Plantarum* 5.210) echoes Virgil's oak at *Georgics* 296-297 (*ingentem sustinet umbram*).[25] The detail of almond-blossom as a weather-predictor recalls *Georgics* 1 (187-192); the passage on the olive is indebted to *Georgics* 2 for the details on its slow growth, spontaneous generation, and ease of cultivation (*Plantarum* 5.561, 568; *Georgics* 2.3, 30-31, 420). Cowley quite literally inscribes textuality onto his trees with his quotation from Virgil on the pine tree:

> Sacráque iactatrix incisa in cortice verba
> *Virgiliana* gerit, Pulcherrima *Pinus* in horto.
>
> And boastfully she wears Virgil's sacred words carved into her bark: 'The pine, most beautiful in the garden.'
>
> *Plantarum* 5.223-224.

Tree and Virgilian text merge into one.

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[24] Attis' self-castration in the service of a goddess recalls Cowley's account of his discovery of his poetic vocation in 'Of Myself' (*Works* (1668): 144): '[I] was thus made a poet as irremediably as a Child is made an Eunuch' (above, p. 95). As a poet-proxy, Attis joins Orpheus, Tityrus, Laurel and Flora.
[25] For the metapoetic connotations of Virgil's imagery here, see Henkel 2009: 231-232.

In the section on the vine which closes the parade of Old World trees (5.727-782), Cowley weaves a dense allusive web in a passage whose identification of wine with Bacchus and poetic inspiration is heavily informed by *Odes* 3.25. We also find the poet out-kissing Catullus, as he yearns not only to draw vinous kisses but to enjoy the drink with his whole body:

> Da mihi te plenam succi, uberibúsque tumentem
> Nectareis; da te facilem; non *oscula* tantùm
> Sumere, nec *suprema* sat est mihi tingere *labra*,
> Interiús, *totóque* frui te *corpore* fas sit,
> Et penetrem foelix fundum *Urinator* ad imum,
> Et me mellifluo madida obruat amne voluptas.

> Give me yourself, full of juice, and swelling with nectar-sweet breasts; give yourself readily. It is not enough for me just to take kisses, nor to stain the edges of my lips, but it is right for me to enjoy you inside me, with my whole body, and may I have the good fortune to penetrate right down to the bottom, as a diver, and may sodden pleasure overwhelm me in a river of flowing honey.

Plantarum 5.732-737.

Cowley claims to be a descendant of Orpheus (738); like Tityrus, he reclines in the shadows (746); his tour of European vineyards is keyed to footnotes referencing Homer, Pliny, Virgil and Columella. With the opening direct questions, the abrupt and sweeping changes of location, and the link between wine and poetry, Cowley strongly evokes Horace:

> Quis Deus, ô, quis me pronepotem nobilis *Orphei*
> (Degenerem quamvìs inopémque, heu, laudis avitae
> Sed redimitum Hederâ tamen, et non vana furentem)
> Collibus *Ismariis* sistat? quis per iuga raptet
> Me *Campana* vagum, foelix ubi *Vinea* fulget
> Sole suprà, Flammísque infrà bis cocta *Vesevi*?
> Aut ubi coelesti *Canaria* celsa superbit,
> Aut ubi Belnensi Burgundia purpurat uvâ?

> Which god, o, which one shall set me, descendant of noble Orpheus (however degenerate and incompetent, alas, but, all the same, one garlanded with the ivy of his ancestral glory, whose ravings are not without meaning), on the Ismarian hills? Which one will transport me, wandering over the Campanian ridges, where the happy vine gleams, doubly ripened by the sun above and the flames of Vesuvius below? Or where lofty Canaria waxes proud in its heavenly grape, or where Burgundia grows purple with that of Beaune?

Plantarum 5.738-745.

> Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui
> plenum? quae nemora aut quos agor in specus
> velox mente nova? quibus
> antris egregii Caesaris audiar
> aeternum meditans decus
> stellis inserere et consilio Iovis?
> dicam insigne, recens, adhuc
> indictum ore alio. non secus in iugis
> exsomnis stupet Euhias,
> Hebrum prospiciens et niue candidam
> Thracen ac pede barbaro
> lustratam Rhodopen, ut mihi devio
> ripas et vacuum nemus
> mirari libet.

Horace, *Odes* 3.25.1-14.

The procession of Old World trees ends with a paean to the grape, to poetic inspiration, and to the literary tradition thus engendered. As such it is a triumphant summary of the European culture that the Old World offers the New.

2.3 Conclusion

Cowley's dense forest is overshadowed above all by Virgil but also by Ovid and Horace. In his parade of Old World trees in book 5, he skilfully weaves together the rich resonances of trees in classical literature and mythology and in contemporary Europe, presenting to the New World gods the opportunity to enjoy this abundant cultural heritage. In book 6, he will forcefully portray Britain as the true guardian of this heritage, conveying the cultural renaissance which will accompany the restored Stuart monarchy, and legitimating British imperialism under the leadership of Charles II as a mission of civilisation and culture.

3 *Penitus toto divisos orbe*: The New World[26]

From the dense forest of the European cultural heritage, Cowley proceeds to his no less complex engagement with the New World. Beginning with the familiar Early Modern narrative of a primeval Eden destroyed by Spanish cruelty and greed, he interweaves a classical intertext, complicating his portrayal with echoes of the depiction of the Latins in the *Aeneid* and with a careful reading of the ambiguities with which Virgil and Horace present the Golden Age. In this section, I focus on the ways in which Cowley introduces his primarily Virgilian intertext to his depiction of the New World. In the concluding part of the chapter (3.6) I shall show how parallels between America and Britain – peoples *penitus toto divisos orbe* – and structural parallels between the American book 5 and the British book 6 create a shifting set of equations, comparisons and contrasts.

The discussion will look primarily at the work's engagement with the classical poetic canon – most of all with Virgil, but also Horace and Ovid.[27] Here, Craig Kallendorf's demonstration of the wide range of Early Modern responses to the *Aeneid* will prove particularly fruitful in generating a nuanced reading of Cowley's Virgilian New World, while James J. O'Hara's work on the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the *Aeneid* enables a more searching scrutiny of the portrayal of the Amerindians and of the prophecy of Apollo.[28] Discussion of Cowley's engagement with seventeenth-century colonialist discourse is informed by the work of Bridget Orr, who demonstrates the extent to which the exotic settings of Restoration heroic drama reflected contemporary British imperialist interests.[29]

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[26] Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.66.
[27] The engagement with the Old Testament, and particularly the book of Genesis, lies beyond the scope of this study, as does the relationship between the *Plantarum* – which depicts America as Eden – and *Paradise Lost* – which depicts Eden as America.
[28] Kallendorf 2007; O'Hara 1990, 1994, 2007.
[29] Orr 2001.

Seventeenth-century intertexts under discussion include Latin treatments of the New World in both prose and verse, including the Columbus epics and the works of José de Acosta, Johannes de Laet and Peter Martyr.[30] Cowley is known to have been a careful reader of Montaigne, whose sympathetic portrait of the Brazilians in his essay *On Cannibals* has much in common with Cowley's treatment of the Amerindians.[31] And while the rich literature on colonialism in Early Modern English literature, notably on *Paradise Lost* and *The Tempest*, is beyond the scope of this study, I shall consider Davenant's two American 'operas' from the Interregnum, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658) and *Sir Francis Drake* (1659), whose chronological proximity to the *Plantarum* coupled with the known close association of their respective authors makes them impossible to ignore.[32]

When Cowley turns to the trees of the New World in the second half of book 5, he depicts a wealth of natural resources which contrasts with the cultural riches of Europe. Apollo's prophecy at the end of the book appears to suggest that the amalgamation of the two will lead to the eclipse of the Old World by the New, though, as I shall argue in the closing section of this chapter, Cowley suggests that the outcome will instead be the establishment of a British empire.

3.1 America and the Golden Age

> 'I am very certain in my soul that this is [...] the Terrestrial Paradise'
> Columbus, *Textos Y Documentos*, p.218.[33]

From the moment of discovery, the Americas were routinely described as an Earthly Paradise, with Christian ideas of a prelapsarian Garden of Eden conflated with Classical Golden Age imagery.[34] The Incan mother-goddess Pachamama, describing the coca tree, endows it with an extraordinary, Edenic fertility:

> cunctarum quotquot ubique
> Terra parit foecunda, haec foecundissima vivit
> Semper, & innumeris turgescit fructibus *Arbor*.
>
> Of all the trees, however so many the fertile earth brings forth in every place, this tree is always the most fertile one alive, and swells with countless fruits.
> *Plantarum* 5.809-811.[35]

Consequently, the inhabitants are able to enjoy a Golden Age self-sufficiency which is contrasted with Europe's fascination with precious metals. Neither the silver of Potossi nor the gold of Cartama is as beneficial to humankind as the cocoa bean, which provides not only

[30] Hofmann 1994; Laird 2014. Quills 1998 (Acosta); Martyr Anglerius 1530; De Laet 1633. On Cowley's sources for book 5, see Bradner 1940: 121 n. 39 and Monreal 2010: 290.
[31] See Nethercot 1931: 263-264; P. Davis 2008: 102-103. Montaigne, *On Cannibals*: Villey 1922-3, vol. 2.
[32] Texts from Clare 2005. For the association between Davenant and Cowley, see e.g. Nethercot 1931: 201-202.
[33] Varela 1982: 218.
[34] Levin 1969: 58-67; Pagden 1986: 51-52; Cro 1994: 379-402.
[35] See also 935, on mescal; 952-954 on the bounty of the coconut.

chocolate, with its sustaining and aphrodisiac qualities, but also fibre for clothing (5.880-90).

> Una Arbor, parvi vectigal nobile fundi
> Et pascit Dominos, & vestit, & ornat, & armat;
>
> One tree, the noble tribute of a small estate, both feeds its masters, and clothes them, and adorns them, and arms them
>
> *Plantarum* 5.898-899.

Precious metals, by contrast, have no other utility:

> O *vera Pecunia*! at inter
> Divitias Mundi (pudet, ah!) nostratis ineptas
> Possimus & *dites* simul *esse*, *Faméque perire*.
>
> O genuine money! But we, among the useless riches of our native world (for shame!) could both be wealthy and the same die of starvation.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.902-904.[36]

This opposition between the real value of rural goods and the vacuity of costly luxuries is reminiscent of Virgil's praise of country life in *Georgics* 2.[37] It is further reinforced by Cowley's repeated use of the imagery of precious metals, emphasising that it is in the trees and plants of America that true riches should be sought. The fruit of the plaintain is described as *aurea mala*; it grows throughout the year, regenerating like the Hydra; and, in a detail which recalls Virgil's Golden Bough, when a branch is plucked, another grows in its place (5.846-858).[38] The mystical regeneration of the plantain's golden fruit contrasts sharply with the violence attendant on the quest for mineral resources.

Cowley's account of the agave (912-949) compares the effects of pulque, the alcoholic drink made from agave juice, to an *aurifer amnis* (934) flowing into the veins. This metaphorical gold-bearing river is entirely benevolent, bringing joy, driving away cares, fears and poverty. Moreover, its mood-altering properties enable the Amerindian to feel genuinely blessed:

> per te miserabilis *Indus*
> Dives adhuc, Libérque sibi, Dominúsque videtur,
> Et *Rege Hispano* est aliquando beatior ipso.
>
> Through you, the pitiable Indian seems to himself still wealthy, free, his own master, and at this moment is more fortunate than the king of Spain himself.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.935-937.

The passage has something in common with the classical praise of the simple pleasures of country life that featured strongly in books 3 and 4 of the *Plantarum*; but, here, a darker note is struck by the emphasis on the illusion of wealth and freedom in the face of a reality of servitude.[39] The trope is a familiar one from Royalist poetry of the Interregnum,

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[36] This motif is also found in the work of Peter Martyr (Martyr Anglerius 1530: 5.4, 8.4).
[37] See e.g. Perkell 2002: 23-25. The motif is a common one in Horace: see e.g. *Odes* 1.38, 2.15; see also Ovid's story of Philemon and Baucis (*Metamorphoses* 8.618-724).
[38] Compare Quills 1998: 4.21. For the Golden Bough, see Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.143-144.
[39] For the 'happy man' as a feature of books 3 and 4, see above, pp. 120-121.

where wine is used to cement a fellowship of like-minded companions and to generate a conviviality capable of withstanding the prevailing political gloom.[40] In 'The Grasshopper', Lovelace enjoined Cotton to raise 'an o'erflowing glass' against winter rain so as to 'create/A genuine summer in each other's breast' (20, 22); the poem's conclusion anticipates the imagined riches of Cowley's Amerindian:

> Thus richer than untempted kings are we,
> That, asking nothing, nothing need:
> Though lords of all what seas embrace, yet he
> That wants himself is poor indeed.
>
> Lovelace, 'The Grasshopper', 37-40.

The Spanish conquest results in misery, hardship and toil, recalling the Biblical Fall as well as the end of the Golden Age. Here Cowley describes how chewing the coca leaf makes life tolerable for the Amerindian, pressed into servitude by European masters:

> Longaeque famis, longíque laboris
> Languores abigunt aegros, membrisque vigorem
> Restituunt, Animúmque levant sub fasce labantem
> Corporis infirmi
>
> They [coca leaves] drive away the feeble exhaustion of long periods of hunger, long periods of toil, they restore energy to the limbs, and raise up the spirit of a weak body as it droops beneath the rod
>
> *Plantarum* 5.819-822.[41]

As at the end of Virgil's Golden Age in *Georgics* 1, the spontaneous bounty of nature has given way to unremitting hardship and toil.

When the Spaniards overlook the abundant vegetable resources of the Americas in their greed for gold, they recall Virgil's farmers, unaware of their good fortune:

> Quàm tu fausta, tuae si tantùm *Hispanus* avarus
> *Gentis* opes, & non *Telluris*, *America*, nosset!
>
> How happy you would have been, America, if the greedy Spaniard had known the riches only of your people and not of your land!
>
> *Plantarum* 5.905-906.
>
> O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
> agricolas!
>
> Virgil, *Georgics* 2.458.

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[40] See eg Miner 1971: 184-185; Potter 1989: 137-143; Keblusek 2004: 57-60. The trope in turn owes much to the celebration of the power of wine in Horace, and particularly to the praise of wine as a remedy for foul weather in Odes 1.9.

[41] The word *fasce* recalls most immediately the fasces of the Roman magistrate. Here, however, the *fasces* under which the American labours is not that of the imperial conqueror but that of his own weak body, corporis infirmi. There is a verbal echo of *Georgics* 3.346-8, where the Roman soldier undertakes a forced march *iniusto sub fasce*: while the political situations are different, the link reinforces the duress and exertion common to both.

At 1105-1107, European acquisition of precious metals becomes an act of physical violation (*penetravit in intima*, 'penetrated the inmost parts'); similarly, Apollo laments America's inability to defend her *viscera* from the rapacious Spaniard (1136).[42]

This picture, like that of Cowley's classical predecessors, is complicated by ambivalence: does the end of the Golden Age bring unrelieved misery, or does it open up the possibility of a beneficial 'progress'?[43] Cowley's Apollo is seen to tend towards the latter view when he assures the New World gods of the advantages that are accruing from contact with Europe: laws, houses, fortified towns, agriculture, seafaring, luxurious clothing, armour, the arts and skills of Minerva and of the Muses (1170-1178). However, these advantages are given a double edge by their use by classical poets as conventional indicators of the end of the Golden Age: houses (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.121) fortifications (*Eclogues* 4.32), agriculture (*Eclogues* 4.33, *Georgics* 1.125, *Metamorphoses* 1.123-124), seafaring (*Eclogues* 4.32, *Georgics* 1.138, *Metamorphoses* 1.132-134), warfare (*Eclogues* 4.35-36, *Georgics* 1.144).[44] Moreover, Apollo's reference at 1177 to *belli pacisque artes* ('the arts of war and peace') further recalls Anchises' famous words in *Aeneid* 6, from his prophecy of Rome's future greatness which is often read as a mandate for Roman imperialism:

> 'tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
> (hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,
> parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.'
>
> Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.851-853.[45]

Taken together, the two passages express the uneasy relationship between conqueror and conquered, the gentle *didicistis* of Apollo's speech contrasting with Anchises' *imponere*. Whether the Amerindians are *subiecti* to be spared, or *superbi* to be 'warred down', the Virgilian intertext implies that the path to the *civile bonis sub legibus aevum* will be one of compulsion and subjugation. Progress comes at a cost: just as, in book 4, the appointment of Hellebore as praetor recognised the necessity of war (above, p. 142), so here Cowley glances towards the less palatable aspects of colonialism.

3.2 The Amerindians of *Plantarum* 5

> Ere the base Laws of Servitude began
> When wild in woods the noble Savage ran.
>
> John Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), 34.

This ambiguity as to whether the process of conquest should be regarded as one of civilisation or subjection is sharpened by Cowley's portrayal of the Amerindians themselves,

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[42] On mining as sexual violation, see McColley 2007: 44-52 and (on Spanish greed more generally) 53-54.
[43] See especially Perkell 2002: 19-20.
[44] See Perkell 2002: 19-23 for a summary of scholarship on the Virgilian ambivalence towards progress in *Georgics* 1.
[45] The scholarship on this passage is reviewed by Nicholas Horsfall (Horsfall 2014: *ad loc*).

which exploits the tension between the noble savage stereotype and that of the violent and vicious barbarian.

Cowley frequently underlines the Amerindians' pastoral heritage to suggest a pre-conquest idyll, using echoes of the *Eclogues* to contrast this idyll with the life of georgic *labor* imposed by the Spaniards. Leisure enabled by a bountiful nature is combined with strongly pastoral detail. In the shade of the plantain, the shepherd may sing, free of care (848-849); reclining (*recubans*) beneath the hovia, he may seek rest, despite Spanish rule (844-845). Shepherds making music while reclining in the shade are a central feature of pastoral poetry; the hovia passage, via *recubans* and *umbra*, directly references the opening of *Eclogue* 1: *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi*.[46]

Juxtaposed with the peaceful self-sufficiency of the indigenous people is the behaviour of their gods, who are uncouth, hirsute and tattooed; quick to anger; and susceptible to strong drink. As such, their most powerful classical model is the Celtic tribes in Tacitus' *Agricola* and *Germania*.[47] When taunted by his drinking-companion Bacchus, Omelochilus responds by flying into a rage and growling comically (*absurdum fremit iratus*, 790-791), whereupon his fellow-gods join with him in a violent attack on the Old World deities, howling, bellowing, roaring and grinding their teeth (1011-1013). In a detail recalling classical depictions of Gigantomachy, the sea recoils and the earth trembles (1013-1014).[48] The gods themselves resemble monsters: Omelochilus, with his crude and twisted features (*deformia ora*, 1007); greedy Vitziliputlus, devourer of human flesh (1017-1018), belching fumes of tobacco and grunting unintelligibly in his native tongue (1008-1011); Tescalipuca, no more civilised (*nil humanior*) than his leader (1021-1022).[49]

The clearest allusion is to Hercules' battle with the monster Cacus in *Aeneid* VIII (185-275).[50] Vitziliputlus' tobacco fumes recall the fire-breathing Cacus:

> fumos & nubila foeda *Tabaci*
> Ore bibens, atróque eructans iugiter ore
>
> drinking in with his mouth the smoke and filthy clouds of Tobacco, and from blackened mouth belching them out perpetually.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1015-1016

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[46] See e.g. Coleman 1977: 8: 'Music occupies a central place in Arcadian life; it is the social activity to which the herdsmen instinctively turn whenever they gather together with their flocks in the cool shade.'
[47] See e.g. Conte 1994: 534; Cro 1994: 385. For the uncouthness of the Amerindian deities, see e.g 5.75-76, 971; hairiness, *horrida* (1023); tattoos 835-836.
[48] See eg Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.177-180.
[49] For the identification of Cowley's American gods, and information as to his sources, see Kinney 2007 ('Savage Gods of the Aztecs', http://cowley.lib.virginia.edu/small/pt12frnt.htm). On Omelochilus' Nahuatl speech, see Monreal 2010: 274-276.
[50] On the Gigantomachic character of this episode, see Hardie 1986: 110-118.

illius atros
ore uomens ignis magna se mole ferebat

Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.199-200

Ille autem, neque enim fuga iam super ulla pericli,
faucibus ingentem fumum (mirabile dictu)
euomit inuoluitque domum caligine caeca

Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.251-253.

Vitziliputlus is a devourer of human flesh, *humanae helluo carnis* (1017); Cacus affixes human heads to the entrance of his cave (*Aeneid* 8.196-197). When Hercules dislodges the stone blocking the entrance, the air thunders and the river recoils in terror (239-240; compare *Plantarum* 5.1013-1014). But when the gods grind their teeth (*dentibus infrendens*, 1013), the allusion is not to Cacus but to Hercules, of whom the same phrase is used as he paces around Cacus' lair in frustration.

Twentieth-century scholarship has looked beyond the traditional identification of Hercules with the forces of civilisation and focused instead on the mindless *furor* and *ira* with which Hercules meets Cacus.[51] In particular, Michael Putnam has demonstrated the extent to which Hercules and Cacus are doublets of one another in their pride in victory, the extremity of their anger, and their association with images of blackness.[52] Cowley effectively collapses Hercules and Cacus, restricting irrational anger to the American gods while presenting the classical deities as responding with a restrained and manly valour (*viriliter arma capescunt*, 'in manly fashion they lay hold of their arms' 1029-1030). Similarly, in Apollo's speech, the god emphasises how America will benefit from contact with Europe (above, p. 160). It is also in this section that we find reference to Montezuma and Huayna Capac, whose empires are compared unfavourably with that of Rome (1197-1199).

The encounter between Cacus and Hercules takes place in primitive Italy, a locus regularly used by Early Modern writers as an analogy for the New World.[53] Thus Peter Martyr:

> Varios ibi esse reges, hosque illis, atque illos his, potentiores inveniunt, uti fabulosum legimus Aeneam in varios divisum reperisse Latium, Latinum puta, Mezentiumque ac Turnum & Tarchontem, qui angustis limitibus discriminabantur, & huiuscemodi reliqua per tyrannos dispartita.
>
> There they find that there are various kings, and some more powerful than others, and those more so than others still, just as we read that the Aeneas of legend found Latium divided between several men, such as Latinus, Mezentius and Tarchon, who were separated by narrow borders, and with the rest distributed between rulers of this kind.
>
> Martyr, *De Orbe Novo* 1.3.

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[51] *Aeneid* 8.228, 230. See e.g. Zarker 1972: 34-48; Heiden 1987: 661-671. Earlier in *Plantarum* 5, Cowley describes Hercules as a mere warrior, ignorant of the power of plants and of the arts of Apollo (369-370), since he steals the apples of the Hesperides but is unable to use them.
[52] Putnam 1985: 4.
[53] See e.g. Kallendorf 2007: 67-137; Cro 1994: 395.

Modern scholarship has tended to emphasise Virgil's different and often conflicting accounts of Italian prehistory, identifying a tension between a 'soft primitivism' associated with the Golden Age and a 'hard primitivism' which casts Aeneas and the Trojans as a civilising force.[54] Early Modern English depictions of Amerindians, informed by an anti-Spanish agenda, tended to draw on a Virgilian 'soft primitivism' to emphasise a common humanity: thus, for example, John Phillips' 1656 translation of de las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552), which evoked sympathy for the indigenous peoples via graphic descriptions of Spanish brutality.[55] In France, Montaigne went still further, taking up a position of cultural relativism in which a world without social organisation or property ownership was one devoid of corruption; and he even asks his reader to compare Amerindian cannibalism with European torture.[56] Cowley's emphasis on the self-sufficiency of the Amerindians and the fecundity of their territory (above, p. 168) aligns his account with this idealistic European tradition, though this idealism is tempered by a Virgilian ambivalence as to whether these indigenous peoples should be read as prelapsarian innocents or savages to be tamed.[57]

Cowley further shares with Virgil the use of identification and focalisation to manipulate the reader's viewpoint. In the *Aeneid*, the reader is conscious at different times of the Latins both as Roman ancestors ('ourselves' for a Roman reader) and as 'other', people whose conquest and assimilation is a key part of Aeneas' destiny.[58] As we shall see, in the *Plantarum*, the Spanish conquerors are overtly 'other', as witness the frequent references to their cruelty and greed; at lines 1108-1123, in an instance of what Don Fowler calls 'deviant focalisation', the reader is asked to view their arrival through the eyes of the Amerindians, who by this process become 'ourselves':[59]

At gens *Hispanam* miratur *America classem*
Ad sua diffusis tendentem littora velis,
Viventésque putat terris accedere moles,
Aligeros *Cetos*, formaeque animalia mirae
Mirantur cultúmque habitúsque atque arma virorum,
Et crustam humanis ferratam accrescere membris,
Ferventes mirantur Equos, Equitésque biformes;
Et varium duplici conflatum ex corpore monstrum,
Hoc *Hinnere*, alióque *Loqui* (quis crederet?) ore.
Praecipuè *Bombardarum* vultúmque sonúmque
Et subitas fumi commisto fulgore nubes,
Et veri peiora imitamina *Fulminis* horrent,
Te vidi attonitum (non, sodes, ipse negabis)
Altitonans *Viracocha*, homines timuisse Tonantes.
Nec minùs intereà vestrae stupet advena terrae
Insolitam rerum faciem, ignotásque figuras:

[54] The literature on Virgil's depiction of early Italy is immense. See especially Perkell 2002: 4-7; O'Hara 2007: 96-101; Toll 1997: 34-56; Ando 2002: 123-142; R. Thomas 1982: 93-107; Zetzel 1997: 188-203.
[55] See e.g. Valdeón 2012: 849-851; Sauer 2006.
[56] Villey 1922-3: xxi. See also Cro 1994: 398-405.
[57] Cro 1994: 5.
[58] See e.g. Conte 1994: 280-281; Toll 1989: 107-118.
[59] D. Fowler 1990: 42-63. On this passage in the *Plantarum*, see Hofmann 1994: 630.

> But the American people marvel at the Spanish fleet, making its way towards their shores with sails outspread, and they think that living masses are coming to the land, winged whales, and they marvel at animals of wondrous shape, and at the clothing and appearance and weapons of the men; they marvel too that an iron shell encrusts the limbs of humans, and at the steaming horses and the horsemen of double form; and the way that a mixed-up monster assembled from a twofold body, whinnies from one mouth and (who would have believed it?) speaks from another. Most of all they shudder at the appearance and sound of cannon, and the sudden clouds of smoke mingled with a flash of light, and the more deadly imitations of the genuine thunderbolt. I saw that you (you will not yourself deny it, please), high-thundering Viracocha, were thunder-struck with fear at thundering humans. No less, meanwhile, was the newcomer to your land dumbfounded at the unfamiliar appearance of everything, and the unknown shapes.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1108-1123.[60]

The inhabitants' bewildered reaction to the newcomers is described: they mistake ships for islands or whales (1110-1111), armour for a strange growth (1113), horsemen for a kind of Centaur (1114-1116), artillery for thunderbolts (1117-1118). Cowley's vivid and pictorial language – *aligeros cetos, crustam ferratam, biformes equites, subitas nubes* – powerfully evokes the alien character of the new arrivals. Moreover, when the focalisation switches to the Spaniards, Cowley's language makes it clear that they, not the Amerindians, are the strangers, the 'other', when they are described as *advena* (1122).

Virgil uses the same word in a very similar context, when Aeneas' fleet arrives in Italy:

> Nunc age, qui reges, Erato, quae tempora, rerum
> quis Latio antiquo fuerit status, aduena classem
> cum primum Ausoniis exercitus appulit oris,
> expediam, et primae reuocabo exordia pugnae.
>
> Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.37-40.

Like Cowley's Spaniards, here the Trojans are 'other', an invading fleet whose arrival will result in *horrida bella* and *funera* (41-2).[61] One effect of the Virgilian passage is to highlight the shared heritage of his Roman readers with the indigenous Italians as well as with their Trojan colonists. A similar process is at work in the *Plantarum*, where an identification between Amerindians and 'ourselves' is generated at least in part through Cowley's emphasis on the 'otherness' of the Spaniards.

3.3 The Spaniards in *Plantarum* 5

> The Spanish eagle darkly hovering here
>
> Davenant, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, The Sixth Song.

By the time Cowley was writing the *Plantarum*, the brutality of the Spanish towards their Amerindian subjects had become proverbial. The passionate debate as to the ethics of Spanish imperialism ignited by the 'Controversy of the Indies' spawned the immensely influential *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* of Bartolomé de las Casas

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[60] Line 1110: the 1668 text reads *accendere*, corrected in the 1678 edition to *accedere*, which I follow here. Line 1118: *fulgere* (1668) corrected to *fulgore* (1678).
[61] See Toll 1989: 108-109; O'Hara 2007: 96-97.

(1542) and gave rise to the so-called 'Black Legend' of the Spanish conquest.[62] First translated into English in 1583, the work was to inform Elizabethan writing on colonialism; subsequent versions appeared in 1620 and, shortly before the *Plantarum*, in 1654, this time by Milton's nephew John Philips.[63] The political significance of this publication is discussed below (p. 214); here, it suffices to note that it was followed by a number of works dealing with the Spanish conquest, notably Davenant's *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658), Dryden's *The Indian Queen* (1664), *The Indian Emperour* (1665) and *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), and of course *Plantarum* 5.[64] All these works are sympathetic to the Amerindians, and, with the exception of *The Indian Queen,* which is set before the conquest, all emphasise Spanish brutality and greed.[65]

Greed, above all for gold, is a defining characteristic of Cowley's Spaniards. This was a recurrent motif in Early Modern writing on the New World. When Pizarro tortures Montezuma in Dryden's *The Indian Emperour*, it is to persuade him to divulge the hiding-place of his gold reserves (Act 5, Scene 2); Davenant includes a comic scene of a Spaniard divested of 'ingots of gold and wedges of silver' by two apes and a great baboon.[66] Significantly, amidst the collective hand-wringing that followed the failure of Cromwell's Western Design in the mid-1650s, Sir Henry Vane's *A Healing Question* argued that the desire for personal enrichment had incurred divine displeasure.[67]

The Spaniards of *Plantarum* 5 are greedy for dominion as well as for natural resources. They are ruthlessly brutal in the extent of their devastation (*ferox*), though even this cannot exhaust America's natural bounty (5.129-137); they enslave the native population (*dominante*, 5.845; *dominator*, 5.874); they are characterised as greedy (*avarus*, 5.905). In this last passage, Cowley contrasts the natural abundance of the cocoa plant with the mineral wealth of the earth, wishing forlornly that Spanish greed had been directed towards the former rather than the latter (5.905-906). Similarly, he contrasts the harmless quest for the purple dye of cochineal with the cataclysmic bloodshed of the wars of conquest (5.874-877). As observed above (p. 170-1), Cowley depicts life under Spanish rule as one of wearisome toil, and contrasts the sleep enjoyed under the hovia tree with a harsh reality. Early in book 5, the Aztec god Omelochilus speaks of *Hispanus ferox* (129) and describes the devastation of conquest in lines which reference the war-torn agricultural landscape of parts of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*:

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[62] Lupher 2006: 56-61; Valdeón 2012: 840-841.
[63] Valdeón 2012: 841-842.
[64] *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*: Clare 2005; *The Indian Queen*: Swedenberg et al.: vol. 8; *The Indian Emperour*, Swedenberg et al.: vol. 9; *The Conquest of Granada*, Swedenberg et al.: vol. 11.
[65] Davenant's Spaniards roast an Indian prince on a spit and cruelly abuse the Peruvians whom they force to transport their plundered gold (*The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, Fifth Entry); Dryden depicts the torture of Montezuma by Pizarro and a Christian priest (*The Indian Emperour*, Act 5, Scene 2).
[66] Davenant, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, Sixth Entry.
[67] Vane 1656: 32.

Hispanúsque ferox, caesis cultoribus omnem
Divastavit agrum, & latè sola sola reliquit

and the savage Spaniard has slaughtered the farmers, and has ravaged the entire land, and left the earth deserted far and wide.

Plantarum 5.129-130.

In the *Hispanus ferox* can be read an echo of the *miles* [...] *barbarus* of *Eclogues* 1.70-71 and of the *advena* of *Eclogues* 9.2; the abandoned fields recall the end of *Georgics* 1 (*squalent abductis arva colonis*, 507).[68] But whereas Virgil depicts confiscation and displacement, Omelochilus' story is one of slaughter (*caesis cultoribus*) and devastation (*divastavit agrum*).

Near the end of the book, Apollo speaks of the unspeakable war waged by a guest turned bitter enemy, again deploying the motif of agricultural ruin:

hinc caedes & bella nefanda
Quae gestit mox Hostis atrox ex hospite factus;
Quae mihi nunc memorare dolet, puduítque videre.
Hinc desolatum latè cultoribus orbem
Vidimus; hinc Mundi integri, tanquam Unius Urbis
Vidimus excidium;

Hence come the slaughter and the unspeakable wars which the savage enemy, transformed from a guest, soon longs for; which it grieves me to mention now, and shamed me to behold. Then we saw the world stripped far and wide of its farmers; then we saw the sack of a whole world, as though of a single city;

Plantarum 5.1129-1134.

The intertextual range here is extensive.[69] *Bella nefanda* echoes the opening of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, where *nefas* appears in line 6 and the phrase *belli nefandi* at 21. But this prophecy of terrible warfare also recalls the Virgil's Sibyl: *bella, horrida bella,/et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno* (*Aeneid* 6.86-87). In Virgil's text, the Sibyl prophesies a second Trojan War (88-94); Cowley's Apollo also alludes to the story of Troy. *Hostis atrox ex hospite factus* (*Plantarum* 5.1130) evokes Paris, whose abuse of hospitality is archetypal; and the comparison of the destruction of the New World to the sack of a city at 1133-1134 alludes to Homer's simile describing the lamentation at the death of Hector:

ὣδὲ μάλιστ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔην ᾽ἐναλίγκιον ὡς εἰ ἅπασα
῞Ιλιος ὀφρυόεσσα πυρὶ σμύχοιτο κατ᾽ἄκρης.

Homer, *Iliad* 22.410-411.

Homer's simile conveys the inevitability of Troy's fall now that her greatest warrior is lost; Cowley's works in the opposite direction, concentrating the enormity of a civilisation's collapse into the more readily imaginable picture of the sack of a city.[70] I shall return to the implications of America as another Troy; for now, we should note how emphatic are these

[68] Annabel Patterson has shown how Cowley's contemporaries read the *Eclogues* with reference to their own experience of civil war (Patterson 1984: 163-192).
[69] On this passage, see McColley 2007: 53-54.
[70] Richardson 1993: *ad loc*.

references to treachery and annihilation, coming as they do from a god who is at least notionally on side of the aggressors.

Cowley's account of the New World gives a strongly Virgilian cast to contemporary tropes of a Golden Age America and its prelapsarian inhabitants, while his depiction of Spanish brutality and greed is to some extent tempered by his reading of the ambiguities inherent in Virgil's account of primitive Italy. But it is the concluding prophecy by Apollo which is the work's most immediately distinctive feature, and that which has attracted the most critical attention. I turn now to Apollo's speech at the end of the book, looking at its content and at the wider implications of the shift away from the authorial voice.

3.4 Apollo in *Plantarum* 5

Aurea veloci percurrens pectine fila

Running over the golden strings with the swift plectrum

Plantarum 5.1040.

Apollo holds a special position in the *Plantarum*. He is the god of medicine and healing plants, the work's professed theme, and the god of poetry, its medium; he is responsible for reporting to the poet the events of book 6 (6.37-38); his plant, the laurel, fulfils the same function in book 2 and is the ultimate source of the information in 6 (2.43-48, 6.37). Cowley's epigraph to the 1662 edition of *Plantarum* 1-2, reused in the posthumous publication of all six books, is particularly applicable to Apollo: *habeo quod* [sic] *carmine sanet et herbis*.[71]

At the same time, Apollo is particularly associated with the New World. In book 4, the Sunflower, *Flos Solis*, is Apollo's plant (4.830-835), native to the 'golden world' of America (*orbe in aureo*, 4.853), a 'living coinage' (*vivam monetam*, 855) printed with Apollo's image. In book 5 he explains that, before Columbus, the New World was known only to him (5.1080); that he inspired Columbus to make his voyage (1086-1088); he was witness to the atrocities of the Spanish conquest (1131-1134).[72]

This association of Apollo with America is further supported by the poem's intertexts. I have already shown how the Amerindians are linked to Virgil's Latins both in the *Plantarum* and in other writing on the New World (above, p. 173); the Latins also have a strong link with Apollo, through the laurel tree around which Latinus' palace is built and which is dedicated to the god (*Aeneid* 7.59-63).[73] In Early Modern texts, Amerindian religion is typically characterized as sun-worship, with both Davenant's and Dryden's American plays featuring priests of the sun god – whose classical equivalent is of course Apollo. As a god associated

[71] *PLD*; *Poemata Latina*. Epigraph from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.397.
[72] Hofmann 1994: 628-632; Hinman 1960: 290-292.
[73] See Fratantuono 2007: 209.

with the sun, with the far west, and with healing, he is uniquely qualified for his role as peace-maker in *Plantarum* 5.

But is his song to be taken at face value? Or is it a cynical – albeit successful – attempt to defuse a potentially catastrophic situation?[74] This question is given added sharpness via Virgil's use of prophecy in precisely this way in the *Aeneid*, where – as James O'Hara has shown – the content of prophetic utterance is frequently a heavily edited version of the truth, modified in order to suit the needs of the moment and the anticipated desires of the audience. Moreover, Craig Kallendorf's work on the Early Modern reception of the *Aeneid* has demonstrated the range of nuanced readings available to Cowley as he composed the *Plantarum*.[75]

The *Plantarum* as a whole is somewhat ambivalent as to the relationship of poetry to literal truth. On the one hand, Cowley is clear in the *Praefatio* to *PLD* that poets – including himself – sometimes lie: *Nobis* [poets] *aliquando mentiri concessum est* ('we are sometimes given permission to lie').[76] On the other hand, the Laurel, his source for the events of 2, is *nescia fallendi* ('ignorant of deceit', 2.50) and Apollo, her patron, is *veridico deo* ('the truth-telling god', 2.606). Music, so closely associated with poetry, has the power to beguile and enchant: the music of the lotus-wood flute is described as more powerful than the songs of the Sirens or Circe – *nam magica est certe dulcedo sonorum* ('for, to be sure, the sweetness of its strains is magical', 5.479-482). The music of Apollo's lyre is similarly endowed with a magical sweetness (*magica dulcedine*, 5.1060) which calms the belligerent Amerindian deities, so that they are in a state of rapt attention by the time he begins his song (1059-1077). With the repetition of the phrase used earlier with reference to Circe and the Sirens, the calming of the indigenous gods gains the sinister overtones of Circe's transformation of men into pigs and of the sailors maddened by the song of the Sirens.[77] Both music and song become part of a process of hypnotic enchantment.

At lines 180-208, the gods discuss the hazel, seeking an explanation for its powers of divination.[78] Minerva expresses her bafflement, and asks Apollo to step in: just as gods are more learned than humans, so is Apollo wiser than the rest of the gods (*Plantarum* 5.188-189). However, Apollo proves incapable of providing an answer. He flounders in a Lucretian swamp of entelechy, sympathy, and atomism, while Jupiter smiles smugly in the knowledge that the explanation is known to him alone (5.200-206). Apollo, god of poetry, deploys the full battery of cosmological poetry in vain, succeeding only in provoking his father's laughter. Poetry and oracles (204) are both shown to be of limited value in explaining the mysteries of

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[74] *Forsan et illa dies coelestibus atra fuisset* ('Perhaps that day too would have been a dark one for the gods', 5.1031).
[75] O'Hara 1990: 3; Kallendorf 2007: 14.
[76] *Praefatio* 2, sig. b3^{v}.
[77] Homer, *Odyssey* 10, 12.
[78] Cowley, in an extensive footnote on 184, cites his personal experience of the inefficacy of searching for precious metals by means of hazel rods.

nature. The tone of the passage, with its humorous characterisation of the god of prophecy and medicine failing to produce a convincing explanation of a natural phenomenon, is lightened still further by Cowley's footnote, recording his own first-hand experience of a failed attempt at divination (*Plantarum* 5, note 4, on 184). When Apollo insists on the accuracy of his prophecy (*at Phoebo quis verior augur/Venturi?*, 'what truer prophet of things to come than Phoebus?', 1182-1183) – the assertion seems hollow indeed.

The status of Apollo's prophecy is further undermined by the fact that, like the Virgilian examples identified by O'Hara, it has a particular and explicit purpose: to end the battle between Amerindian and European gods.[79] The text's focus is on the effect on the New World deities, who thus become clearly depicted as the aggressors. As well as being described as an enchantment, it is explicitly a *stratagema*, albeit a harmless one (*innocuum*, 1035); its power is such that it could have calmed battles both legendary (that of the Lapiths and Centaurs) and cosmic (the seas and winds), 1045-1047.[80] The New World gods listen in silence, with greedy ears (1049), the Latin phrase *auris avarae* heavily freighted through the poem's emphasis on the disastrous consequences of Spanish greed and through the similarity of the words *auris* and *aurum*. Moreover, through listening to the music they lose both their hostility and their cultural identity: Viracocha ceases to brandish an altar sacred to Pomona (1055-1058); Vitziliputlus drops the bow dedicated to Coatlicue, and his feathered diadem falls from his head (1050-1055). The power of the music becomes analogous to the process of Europeanisation foretold towards the end of Apollo's speech (1161-1181); the American gods reduced to grotesque children, listening mesmerised and afraid even to move lest they interrupt the song:

> Laetantur monstrosorum fera corda Deorum,
> Membráque saltantum iactant immania ritu,
> Sed taciti, metuunt sacrum interrumpere carmen.
>
> The savage hearts of the monstrous gods rejoice, and they fling their grotesque limbs about like dancers, but silently, since they fear to interrupt the sacred song.
> *Plantarum* 5.1143-1145.

Apollo's song is thus presented as a cunning ruse on behalf of the European gods which succeeds in averting imminent danger and in effectively neutralising the Amerindian deities, whose greedy ears prove their undoing just as the Spaniards' lust for gold causes theirs.[81] In this context, it is important to distinguish between Apollo's voice and that of the poet. The reader must also bear in mind the god's pragmatic purpose when considering the prophetic value of the song.

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[79] O'Hara 1990: 5-6.
[80] The depiction of the power of music in cosmic and mythological terms is strongly evocative of the opening of Pindar, *Pythian* 1.
[81] Aeneas' narrative to Dido's court at Carthage in books 1-3 of the *Aeneid* is another successful neutralisation of potential hostility. The fatal consequences of the Carthaginians' friendly reception of Aeneas provides a further reason to question the sincerity of Apollo's speech.

Apollo is uncompromising in conveying the catastrophic consequences of the Spanish lust for gold. The devastation of the New World is compared to the sack of a city (1133-1134) and to a bodily violation:

> Quid nunc certamen inane
> Exercet? Quid nunc *Pomos* defendere tentat
> *Terra suas*, sua quae defendere *viscera* nescit?
>
> Why does she now engage in a futile contest? Why does the earth now try to defend her own fruit-trees, when she does not know how to defend her own vitals?
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1134-1136.[82]

There is an echo of Ovid's depiction of the end of the Golden Age:

> nec tantum segetes alimentaque debita diues
> poscebatur humus, sed itum est in uiscera terrae,
> quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admouerat umbris,
> effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.
>
> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.137-140.[83]

The rape of the earth in Ovid is followed by retribution in the form of the Flood; in the *Plantarum* Apollo makes it clear that the destruction wrought on Europe by her hubristic greed will be even worse (*nec damnosior ulla est cognita diluvies*, 'nor was any flood known more destructive than that one', 1152-1153). With its anthropomorphism of a violated Earth and its stress on the futility of the conflict, the passage deploys tropes used by Cowley and his contemporaries to articulate the horror of civil war.[84]

This section is made particularly powerful by the personification of the gold. It will itself take vengeance for its theft (*ulciscitur*, 1147); it rides roughshod over its conquerors (*insultant captum victoribus ipsis*, 1148); most strikingly, it is described as a second Helen (1159-1160). I have already commented on Apollo's use of the Trojan motif (above, p. 177); I shall discuss its implications in the final part of this chapter. Finally, when Apollo prophesies the eclipse of the Old World by the New, he cautiously expresses the belief that America's wealth will return to her, and will once more cause harm:

> Ponè sequentur Opes; Nollem; sed, credo, redibunt
> In patriam, patriaeque iterum pro more nocebunt.

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[82] Other examples of Spanish greed: the wish that Spain had known America's vegetable rather than mineral resources (905-906); the lust for gold keener than valour (*virtute acrior ipsa*, 1106); the excessive fascination with American gold leading directly to conflict (1129-1130).
[83] On this passage, see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 5-6.
[84] Compare *Plantarum* 6.667-670, on England's body ravaged by civil war; 6.748-751 on Britain as a headless corpse. See also Purkiss 2005: 117.

> The wealth will follow behind. I would not wish it thus, but, I believe, it will return to its fatherland, and again, as is its way, it will harm its fatherland.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1192-1193.

With the cautious *credo*, even Apollo seems to undercut the reliability of his own prophecy.

This destabilising of the prophetic content of Apollo's speech and the disjunction between the respective voices of poet and deity encourages a closer interrogation of the prophesy of *translatio imperii* that closes the book. Here, Apollo promises that European culture, the *ingenium* and *artes* of line 1190 – will take up residence in the New World, inaugurating a new empire, governed by virtue and assisted by good fortune (*Et domina his virtus erit, et fortuna ministra*, 1200). In the final part of this chapter, I shall return to this passage, to show that Apollo's prophecy, like that of the Dryad in book 6, foretells not America's imperial destiny, but Britain's. First, however, I shall look at the multiple significations of the English forest of book 6.

4 The Forest in *Plantarum* 6

4.1 The Early Modern English forest

In writing about trees, Cowley is engaging not only with the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, but with a substantial strand of seventeenth-century English social and political discourse. The subject of trees involved a complicated nexus of overlapping and sometimes conflicting associations with monarchy, the social order, with English national identity, and with the 'otherness' represented by the primeval forest.[85] These traditional ways of thinking were brought to prominence in contemporary discourse by the use of the forest as a source of revenue by the early Stuart monarchs and by growing concerns over deforestation caused by population growth and industrial activity, concerns heightened by the extensive tree-felling by both sides in the Civil War.[86] When Charles II took refuge in the Boscobel oak after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, an episode described in lines 939-1013 of *Plantarum* 6, the symbolism was immediately apparent: the forest, the primordial essence of England, was protecting its own.[87]

Consequently, the intertextual allusion to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in *Plantarum* 5-6 is tightly interwoven with the resonances of the English forest and informed by a Royalist agenda in which the monarch is located at that forest's heart. Cowley's enthronement of Charles II in the grove at the opening of book 6 (lines 18-22), his meeting of trees in the Forest of Dean (153-174), and his account of the Boscobel episode (lines 939-1013), are all underpinned by the common contemporary allegory in which the forest represents the state,

[85] R. Harrison 1992: 61-105; McColley 2007: 98-108; Schama 1995: 135-162; Theis 2009: 1-32.
[86] Schama 1995: 153-159; Theis 2009: 10-18.
[87] Walsham 2011: 525-526.

with the monarch represented by the oak tree.[88] The trope was routinely used by the Stuart monarchs well before Boscobel: Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I (c. 1637), now in the National Gallery in London, shows the monarch beneath an oak tree; and, in 1638, the then Prince Charles' investiture in the Order of the Garter was celebrated with a medal depicting a crowned oak standing proudly above lesser trees and grazing sheep.

The tree was routinely used in both orthodox and oppositional discourse as an image of church, state and monarch, particularly in the wake of the regicide.[89] *Dodona's Grove* (1640), by the Royalist James Howell (?1594-1666) is a particularly extensive deployment of the allegory. Set in an England re-named Druina – Oakland – the work is a narrative of European political history between 1603 and 1640, with the oak representing the monarch, yews the bishops, elms the nobility, poplars the Commons, and coppiced woodland the lowest classes.[90] In the dedication to Prince Charles, Howell likens the future monarch to a tree:

> To correspond *Now* with Verdant Spring,
> And your green years, the *top-branche* of a *King,*
> A *Bud* shot from the *Rose* and *Flowre-de-Luce*,
> The best of *Stemmes* Earth did e're yet produce,
> What present can I bring, that more agrees,
> Both with the *season* and your *Yeares,* then *Trees?*
> *They*, soone, will cast their *leafs* and *Autumn* find,
> But may You shed nor *leafs* nor *bloomes* nor *rind,*
> Till muss'd with hoarie *mosse* you doe behold
> Faire *Cions* from your Self, growne tall and old.
>
> 'To the Prince', *Dodona's Grove,* sig. A2^{r}.[91]

Howell's 'parley of trees' was immensely popular, going through four editions, and was given a sequel in 1650 which covered the Civil War years.[92] The identification of the monarch with the oak in *Dodona's Grove* is explicit: modern scholarship has drawn upon the regular association of the two in order to seek a more covert political allegory in such diverse works as Henry Vaughan's 'Daphnis: an Elegiac Eclogue' and Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House'.[93]

The Dryad of the oak tree in *Plantarum* 6, and the tree itself, carry strong monarchical associations: the Dryad is *regni regina virentis*, 'queen of the green realm' (6.171); *regina*, 'queen' (6.178); *sceptrigeram*, 'sceptre-bearing' (6.435); *multa maiestate tumens*, 'great with abundant majesty' (6.438); her shade is *regalis*, 'regal' (6.438-439). When Cowley opens

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[88] Theis 2009: 10.
[89] Theis 2009: 10. See also Nicholson 1997: 234-239; Walsham 2011: 526-528.
[90] Howell 1640.
[91] The description of Charles as the offspring of the 'Rose and Flowre-de-Luce' prefigures the establishment of the republic of the Rose and Lily at the end of *Plantarum* 4.
[92] Howell 1650.
[93] Vaughan: see Wilcher 2001: 299-308. The literature on the hewel and the oak in Marvell's poem is substantial, and inconclusive, despite a consensus that the passage does allude to the regicide: see e.g. Theis 2009: 201-206; Corns 1992: 236-240; Shifflett 1998: 44-45.

Plantarum 6 by seating Charles II in an oak tree (lines 18-22), the invitation to the reader to link monarch and tree is unmistakable.

Royal forests were initially so designated as hunting preserves. Hence the portrayal of the chase becomes a metaphor for monarchical prerogative, a trope that may be deployed positively or as a sign of oppression. Jeffrey Theis has shown how hunting as a means of expressing power is explored and critiqued in *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[94] The hunted stag in Denham's *Cooper's Hill* is a much-discussed example of the trope used with wider political resonance:

> Here have I seen our Charles (when great affaires
> Give leave to slacken & unbend his Cares)
> Chasing the Royall Stagge
>
> John Denham, *Cooper's Hill* (1642 version), 263-5.[95]

Cowley's prayer to the Muse in the opening lines of *Plantarum* 6 is laced with the imagery of hunting:

> Solve mihi *Ingenium pede velox*, solve *sagacis*
> *Iudicium naris*; Facundia libera currat,
> Naturámque premat laeto clamore latentem.
> Tende plagas Mentis, subtilia retia tende,
> Et magnâ constringe fugax Indagine Verum.
> Hic tuus est *Venatus*, & haec tua sola Ferina.
>
> Let loose my swift-footed imagination, let loose my judgement with its keen nose. Let Eloquence run free, and press down upon hidden nature with a cry of joy. Lay the traps of your mind, lay the fine nets, and bind fleeing truth with a great encircling snare. This is your hunt, and this prey is yours alone.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.7-12.
> *Translation: Victoria Moul (with alterations)*.

Here, the Muse takes the place of the monarch: the hunt and the prey belong to her. Cowley as keen-nosed hunting dog makes his way through the forest in attendance not on his king but on his Muse. This subtle adjustment of the conventional heightens the associations of trees with literary text: this is a forest of literary *materia*, and the activity of hunting becomes an analogy for the process of poetic composition. Moreover, this substitution of Muse for king positions Cowley firmly as his Muse's subordinate; conversely, it generates an equivalence between king and Muse. The grove that the poet will plant in order to display Charles to the world is one in which trees and text are closely intertwined, a poetic creation which will showcase both monarch and Muse. As such, it represents a resolution of the tension explored in 'The Complaint' (1663), in which Cowley lamented the folly of attempting to reconcile a political career with his poetic vocation:

> This was my Errour, This my gross mistake,
> My self a demy-votary to make.
> Thus with *Saphira*, and her Husbands fate,

[94] Theis 2009: 64-71, 98-100, 122-123.
[95] O'Hehir 1969. The passage is generally read as alluding to the trial of Strafford, but, as with Marvell's oak and hewel, there is little further consensus. See Carson 2005: 541.

(A fault which I like them, am taught too late)
For all that I gave up, I nothing gain,
And perish for the part which I retain.

Cowley, 'The Complaint', 138-143.[96]

The trope of the forest as royal preserve is contrasted with its status as a place of otherness, opposed to civilisation and to the city, and as a refuge for the outlaw and the marginal figure.[97] Simon Schama has shown how double-edged was this symbolism. On the one hand, the forest functioned as dangerous 'other'. Conversely, because the popular imagination identified the forest so closely with the island's indigenous inhabitants, that 'other' could represent a patriotic opposition and resistance to a usurping regime, as in the Robin Hood legend.[98] During the seventeenth century, the forest became even more strongly identified with national origins: with the union of England and Scotland beginning to favour a discourse of 'Britain' rather than 'England', national identity was increasingly framed in terms of the pre-Roman Britons rather than the 'English', the German Angles and Saxons.[99] And these Britons were envisaged as forest-dwellers to whom the oak tree, via the false etymology of Druid with δρῦς, 'oak', was of central importance.[100]

The forest of book 6 lies at the heart of British national identity. Peace chooses the British groves (*lucis*, 6.50) over war-torn Europe; when the Civil War breaks out, it affects the forests as much as the city (*Nam paria et sylvis instabat fata Britannis*, 'for the same fate pressed upon the British woods', 6.112). At the heart of the forest lies the oak, worshipped in ancient times and now the source of the ships which protect this island nation with a wooden rampart:

Quàm benè consuluit terrae Natura *Britannae*
Oceani magnum tendens hìc ponere regnum! [...]
[...] At *Querceta* dedit toto longè optima mundo,
Belligerúmque nemus solidavit robore multo,
At maris immensi vastâ circumdata Fossâ
Insula stat secura minarum, & classibus illam
Roboreis communit inexuperabile Vallum.
Non igitur *Dryadae* nostrates pectore vano
Nec sine consulto coluerunt Numine Quercum,
Non illam *Albionis* iam tum celebravit honore
Stulta superstitio, venturíve inscia soecli
Angliaci ingentes puto praevidisse triumphos
Roboris, Imperiúmque maris, quod maximus olim
Carolides vastâ victor ditione teneret.

How well did nature have regard for the British land when she aimed to place here the great kingdom of the Ocean! [...] But she gave oak trees, best by far in the whole world, and strengthened her warlike woods with abundant timber; but the island stands, safe from threats, surrounded by the enormous moat of the boundless sea, and an insurmountable rampart of oaken ships fortifies it. Not therefore with empty enthusiasm did our native Druids worship the

[96] Cowley 1663: 52-58.
[97] Theis 2009: 14-15; Schama 1995: 142-153; R. Harrison 1992: 14-15; K. Thomas 1991: 194-196.
[98] Schama 1995: 151-153; Theis 2009: 9-11.
[99] See Olwig 2002: 62-79; Schama 1995: 161. In *Poemata Latina*, the opening pages of books 5 and 6 are decorated with a border of Tudor roses and thistles, drawing attention to the union of the English and Scottish crowns.
[100] The etymology, deriving ultimately from Pliny, also appears *in Poly-Olbion* (Pliny, *NH* 16.249; Drayton 1612: Song 9, 417, with Selden's note).

> oak, nor without divine assent, even then no stupid superstition fêted the tree with Albion's honour, nor one unaware of the future age; I think they foresaw the immense triumphs of the English oak, and the dominion over the sea, which one day the most mighty son of Charles would hold victorious under his immense sway.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.515-616, 521-532.

The personification of the forest (*belligerum nemus,* 522) reinforces the fit between the trees which provide the fortifying ships (*classibus illam/Roboreis communit inexuperabile vallum,* 524-525) and the people who man them. Moreover, the importance of the oak wood is a constant throughout British history, from its ancient worship by pagan ancestors to its contemporary role in the naval empire of Charles II.[101]

Cowley ties the Britons even more closely to the oak via the story of Brutus, the legendary Trojan ancestor of the Britons and instigator of Druidic cult (*Plantarum* 6.569-619).[102] When the Dryad explains that she speaks from an oak tree descended from one planted by Brutus (6.622-623), the link with British prehistory further meshes the Stuart oak with the island's semi-mythic pre-Germanic inhabitants as quintessential and unsullied Britons. When Charles II takes refuge in the oak tree at Boscobel, Cowley locates him at the heart of British national identity.

The section on the flight from the Battle of Worcester and the Boscobel oak is one of the emotional high-points of the Dryad's speech (916-1019). A shattered remnant of Charles' army escapes from the battle, before the Dryad explains that she is about to reveal why she has called the meeting and the part that the trees are to play in ensuing events. She foretells how Charles will dismiss his weeping companions and disguise himself as a rustic, divesting himself of the insignia of the Order of the Garter and cutting off his long hair (949-962). From living in the former Whiteladies Priory he takes to the woods as a hermit (963-964); finally

> [...] hoc etiam Fortuna negabit,
> Eripiet tandem Terram crudeliter ipsam,
> Vix profugo sedem dabit Arbor in Aëre tutam.

> Fortune will deny even this, and finally will cruelly snatch away the very earth, and scarcely will a tree give this fugitive a safe seat in the air.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.965-967.[103]

It is at this point that the trees are called to arms:

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[101] Cowley's identification of tree and nation recalls Horace, *Odes* 4.4.57-60, where Hannibal compares the persistent survival of the Roman nation to an indestructible oak tree.
[102] The figure of Brutus derives ultimately from the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* (Dumville 1985: 10, 17-18); the best-known version was the twelfth-century *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth (Griscom and Jones 1929: 1.3-18, 2.1). The legend is also treated in Camden's *Britannia* (Camden 1607, 5-6) and Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (Drayton 1612: Song 1, 304-506). It retained currency through the seventeenth-century, despite widespread scepticism. See Weinbrot 1993: 559-560; Olwig 2002: 72-74; Hardie 2015: 233-234.
[103] Compare the opening of the *Aeneid*: *fato profugus, Laviniaque venit/litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto* (1.2-3).

Tum vos, ô, Lucum (ne frustrà haec dicta putetis)
Ad Bellum properate omnes;

Then you, O, to the grove (lest you should think these words spoken in vain), all make haste to the beautiful grove.

Plantarum 6.968-969.

Lucum bellum is a Latinisation of Boscobel; but the intervening parenthesis has the effect of enabling *ad Bellum properate omnes* to stand alone – the trees hasten not just to Boscobel, but *ad Bellum*. Each tree-nymph is to enter her own tree in the Boscobel wood, with the largest oak reserved for the Dryad (968-972), where they are to stand guard against approaching enemy soldiers, protecting the king with their dense shadows (973-979). The arrival of the king is narrated in tones of high drama and tremendous intertextual richness:

intereà quis Rusticus iste est?
Vel quid humi recubat, nostráque sub arbore solus?
Num *Latro* aut *Speculator* adest? Nam quis nisi talis
Sub Iove tam saevo ventum perpessus & imbrem
Duraret? vultum, precor, ô, habitúmque notemus,
Et quid agat; sordent crines & scortea vestis;
Moestitiae multa in vultu, sed plura laboris
Immodici videor vestigia inusta videre,
Credo equidem & facies aliquâ fuligine tincta est.
Sed tamen haec inter (vos acrem intendite visum)
Sacrum nescio quid, non enarrabile quiddam
Luminis arcani scintillat, iámque tuenti
Clariùs assurgit; num me mea lumina Divam
Fallunt fatidicam? Nisi fallunt, *Rusticus* iste,
Rusticus iste miser (proh coelum & Numina!) *Rex est*
Iam certè *Rex* est; Divina apparet imago,
Expugnátque leves tenebras & nubila vana.

Meanwhile, who is that rustic? Why indeed does he recline on the ground, alone beneath our tree? Surely some robber or spy isn't here? For who but such a one could bear it, enduring the wind and rain beneath so brutal a sky? I pray, O let us examine his face and his clothing, and what he is doing. His hair is dirty and his clothes made of leather. There is great sadness in his face, but I seem to behold more traces of excessive toil branded upon him. Indeed I believe his face is also stained by some kind of soot. But all the same, among these things (you, apply your keen scrutiny) something sacred, a certain inexpressible quality of hidden light sparks forth. Now as I watch it appears more clearly. Surely my own eyes do not deceive me, a prophetic goddess? Unless they do deceive me, that rustic, that wretched rustic (by heaven and the gods!) is the king, Now it is certainly the king. The divine image appears, and fights off the gossamer shadows and the empty clouds.

Plantarum 6.982-98.

To the Dryad, Charles appears to be a *latro aut speculator* (984); to the reader, he is alternately Tityrus reclining beneath the beech tree of *Eclogue* 1 (*recubat*, *Plantarum* 6.984), Turnus in *Aeneid* 9 (*uentos perpessus et imbres*, *Aeneid* 9.60; *ventum perpessus et imbrem*, *Plantarum* 6.985) and Hector in *Aeneid* 2 (*squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis*, *Aeneid* 2.277); *sordent crines et scortea vestis*, *Plantarum* 6.987).[104] And yet, in a trope first used of the disguised Charles I, his true identity is unmistakable.[105] Finally, in a passage later paraphrased by Evelyn (below, p. 191), Charles climbs the oak tree (1011); the Dryad

[104] Hector bore the marks on his feet from Achilles' mutilation of his corpse, *Aeneid* 2.273; Charles' sore and bleeding feet were part of the Worcester legend, and alluded to in *inusta vestigia* (989).
[105] See Potter 1989: 59-71.

inclines her branches for ease of ascent, forms a soft canopy, and makes mistletoe grow above his head (1012-1016); the trees bow their heads in adoration of their monarch (1018).

By recognising Charles as king, seeing through his disguise, protecting him and making obeisance, at a time when his other followers have abandoned him or been dismissed, the trees bear witness to the status of the forest as representing the quintessence of a monarchical, Stuart, England and its opposition to the Cromwellian regime. The forest itself becomes a locus of resistance, a last vestige of loyalism.[106] And when Charles sits beneath the canopy of oak leaves with mistletoe growing *supra caput*, he virtually becomes a tree himself, an embodiment of the union of the classical tradition embodied by the Dodona oak with the Celtic heritage via the mistletoe of Teutates. The political allegory of Howell's *Dodona's Grove* is all but collapsed, with trees providing effective substitutes for the subjects and soldiers who have evaporated, and the king himself becoming to all intents and purposes a tree.

As in the Robin Hood legend, the forest provides a safe space for the expression of loyalty to the king. Interwoven with Cowley's intertextual engagement with the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* is a strongly Royalist sensibility, fully alert to the allegorical potential of trees and the forest in a contemporary political context. As such, it aligns itself particularly with the *Sylva* tradition, and above all with John Evelyn's *Sylva*, published in 1664, between the two instalments of the *Plantarum.*

4.2 The *Sylva* tradition and Evelyn's *Sylva*

The title *Sylva* for the final pair of books applies literally to their subject matter; but it was also widely used in the seventeenth century to denote a poetic miscellany in the tradition of Statius (c. 45-c. 96 A.D.) In the preface to the first of his five books of *Silvae*, Statius presents the work as a verse miscellany, a collection of extempore poems assembled in haste and lacking polish – like a mass of unhewn timber.[107] As David F. Bright has shown, however, there is a tension between this metaphor and the careful organisation and design implied by Statius' use elsewhere of architectural imagery.[108] The work of Poliziano (1454-1494) did much to popularise Statius and the *silva* genre, which by about 1500 had evolved, in both neo-Latin and the vernacular, into a poetic miscellany of allegedly relatively impromptu verse.[109] Jonson influentially adopted the trope in *The Forrest* (pub. 1616), *Under-wood* and

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[106] The Royalist sympathies of the trees is never in doubt, and is demonstrated by their dramatic reaction to the prophecy of the regicide: the Dryad, overcome with emotion, breaks off her narrative, while the trees themselves lament with deep groaning followed by a long, death-like silence (*Plantarum* 6.738-746).
[107] Statius, *Silvae* 1, *praef*. For an account of the term *silva* in ancient literary criticsm, see Newmyer 1979.
[108] Bright 1980: 22-24; de Bruyn 2001: 358-359.
[109] See van Dam 2008: 45-64; A. Fowler 1982: 164-165; Radcliffe 1988: 797-809.

Timber (both pub. 1640), and in the preface to *Under-wood* made explicit the association between trees and text:

> The Ancients call'd that kind of body Sylva, or Hyle, in which there were works of divers nature and matter congested; as the multitude call Timber-trees, promiscuously growing, a Wood or Forrest.
>
> Ben Jonson, *Preface to Under-wood*.[110]

The second edition of Cowley's *Poetical Blossomes* (1636) was supplemented by a collection of additional material, entitled 'Sylva or divers copies of verses made upon sundry occasions by A.C.'[111]

With the publication of Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627), the term, while retaining its literary resonance, also became associated with scientific or technical writing.[112] John Evelyn's *Sylva* (first edition 1664) both applies the term literally to a handbook on the cultivation of trees, and deploys a sensitivity to the term's literary associations.[113] When the 'Sylva' of *Plantarum* 5-6 was published in 1668, the title will have suggested a dual aspect: towards the literary tradition exemplified by Jonson and towards scientific writing. Indeed, even in the 1662 *Praefatio* Cowley had linked his technical subject matter with literary metaphor when he wrote of the *Ingens sylva materiae* – 'the immense forest of material' (*Praefatio* 1, sig. b2^{r}).

Evelyn's *Sylva* is typically regarded as a forestry handbook produced under the aegis of the Royal Society to address contemporary concerns over timber reserves; its emphasis on the cultural and religious importance of trees is often depicted as an eccentricity, albeit one which generates much of the interest of the work for modern readers.[114] Equally, scholars keen to emphasise Cowley's scientific interests have tended to view the *Plantarum* as a work borne out of the poet's earlier study of medicine, his involvement in the Royal Society, and his friendship with Evelyn.[115] However, it seems at least possible that *Sylva* arose as much from Evelyn's own interest in the subject of trees as from a Royal Society commission, and that both *Sylva* and the *Plantarum* are driven by the cultural and spiritual signficance of trees as much as, if not more than, their economic importance.

Sylva and *Plantarum* 5-6 share a Royalist agenda; both position trees at the heart of

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[110] Herford and Simpson 1925-52: vol. 8, p. 126.
[111] Cowley 1636: sig. E1$^{r.}$ Other Early Modern sylvae include Ronsard's *Bocage* (1554), Phineas Fletcher's *Sylva Poetica* (1633), George Herbert's *Lucus* (composed c. 1623), Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648), Dryden's *Sylvae: or, The Second Part of poetical miscellanies* (1685), and Milton's 'Sylvarum Liber', the third part of the Latin poetry in *Poems* (Milton 1645). See Fowler 1982: 165-166; de Bruyn 2001: 362, n. 24.
[112] de Bruyn 2001: 365-370; Preston 2015: 15 comments on *Sylva Sylvarum* as a work of 'indigested' data.
[113] de Bruyn 2001: 465; Theis 2009: 232-235.
[114] See e.g. McColley 2007: 108; Theis 2009: 204-206; Parry 1992: 141-142; Schama 1995: 159-160, who describes it as 'a pruner's manual [grafted] to The Golden Bough.'
[115] Nethercot, for example, casts Evelyn as Cowley's horticultural instructor (Nethercot 1931: 237-239). See also P. Davis 2008: 114; Parry 1992: 144-146; Preston 2015: 155-156; Chambers 1992: 184-185.

the national culture; both deploy the long-standing association between England and her woods to identify the restoration of the country with the renewal of her forests. Evelyn, attempting to convince the newly-restored Charles II of the desirability of tree-planting, presents an alluring vision of a wooded countryside abundantly stocked with game, cattle, and fruit trees:

> And, if thus his Majesties forests and chases were stor'd, *viz.*, with this spreading tree [the oak] at handsom intervals, by which grazing might be improv'd for the feeding of deer and cattel under them, (for such was the old *Saltus*) benignly visited with the gleams of the sun, and adorn'd with the distant land-skips appearing through the glades, and frequent vallies; [...] nothing could be more ravishing; for so we might also sprinkle fruit-trees amongst them [...] for cyder, and many singular uses, and should find such goodly plantations the boast of our rangers, and forests infinitely preferable to any thing we have yet beheld, rude, and neglected as they are: I say, when his Majesty shall proceed (as he hath design'd) to animate this laudable pride into fashion, forests and woods (as well as fields and inclosures) will present us with another face than now they do.
>
> John Evelyn, *Sylva* 1.3.3.[116]

Cowley, too, connects the Restoration with the repair of the ravaged countryside:

> Viginti annorum reparavit damna malorum,
> Composuitque vetus iam validúmque *Chaos*.
> Nec fuerant Urbes tantùm illi atque Oppida curae,
> Respexit *Flores*, arboreúmque genus.
> Restituit *Sylvarum*, *Hortorúmque* auxit honores;
> Et nullum nitidae Pacis omisit opus.
>
> It [the year of the Restoration] repaired the damage of twenty years of troubles, and settled a chaos that was already old and strong. Nor did it care only about the cities and towns, but looked after the flowers and the race of trees. It restored the honour of the woods, and increased that of the gardens, and passed over no task offered by gleaming peace.
>
> *Plantarum* 3.65-70.

The relationship between the two texts deserves closer scrutiny.

Cowley and Evelyn were friends, and the first edition of Evelyn's *Sylva* appeared in 1664, between the publication of the first two books of the *Plantarum* in 1662 and the posthumous appearance of the last four in 1668.[117] The second edition of *Sylva*, published in 1670, contained a prefatory essay and poem by Cowley, 'The Garden', dated August 1666, and apparently intended as the preface to Evelyn's *Kalendarium Hortense*.[118] Newly added as its fourth book was 'An Historical Account of the Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves', which considers trees as sources of creative and spiritual inspiration, linking them both to the classical and biblical tradition and to Britain's Druidical past. In this second edition,

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[116] Unless otherwise specified, quotations are from Evelyn 1664.
[117] For the friendship between Cowley and Evelyn, see Nethercot 1931: 97.
[118] Parry 1992: 144. For Cowley's involvement in Evelyn's *Kalendarium Hortense* (1666), see Miller 1948: 398-401.
The second edition of *Kalendarium Hortense* (1666) was dedicated to Cowley.

Evelyn frequently cites the *Plantarum*, including in book 4 a translation, presumably his own, of *Plantarum* 6.782-823.[119]

Evelyn evidently had access to the complete text of the *Plantarum* when working on the second edition of *Sylva*. Equally, Cowley was considered an appropriate choice to provide a preface for a work concerning cultivation, whether of gardens or trees. And, given the way that both texts heavily associate national prosperity with sylvan husbandry, we should ask not only whether Evelyn knew the *Plantarum* but also whether Cowley knew *Sylva*. Could the Royal Society's interest in the managing of timber stocks for shipbuilding have provided a stimulus for both works, one in English prose and one in Latin verse?

The evidence is frustratingly vague. Evelyn was a founder member of the Royal Society; Cowley, although elected a fellow in March 1661, does not appear in the Fellows' database and, apparently, never paid his dues. Evelyn was appointed to the Georgical Committee, but, despite assertions to the contrary, Cowley does not appear on the list of members.[120] His ode 'To the Royal Society', which prefaced Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667) appears to be the outcome of requests by Sprat and, later, Evelyn, rather than by the Society itself.[121] If *Sylva* was a Royal Society enterprise, Cowley is unlikely to have been involved at that stage.

Recent work, however, has questioned the traditional association of *Sylva* with the Royal Society and with the naval commissioners. V. P. J. Arponen has demonstrated that there was no direct request for advice from the Royal Society, but that the Society asked Evelyn to produce a report on a paper on naval timber, read at the Society but addressed to the king.[122] The Society regarded Evelyn's report as an unsatisfactory response to the paper, but asked him to publish it: *Sylva* duly appeared in 1664.[123] Arponen argues that the content of *Sylva* reflects Evelyn's own horticultural and arboricultural interests rather than representing a specific request for information, and that in its promotion of tree-planting its primary appeal was to the landed elite, who were increasingly interested in the planting of groves and avenues as the predominant gardening aesthetic shifted to a more naturalistic style.[124] Moreover, it has long been recognised that, despite Evelyn's assertions to the contrary, the publication of *Sylva* did not result in an immediate resurgence in tree-planting.[125]

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[119] *Sylva* 4.17. Evelyn describes Cowley as 'our own incomparable poet', and remarks that in these lines – in which the Dryad foretells vengeance for the Cromwellian desecration of the forest – 'he has shew'd himself as well a prophet as a poet.'
[120] I am extremely grateful to Noah Moxham for clarifying the details of Cowley's membership. For a list of the members of the Georgical Committee, see Birch 1756-7: vol. 1, 407. For the claim that Cowley belonged to the committee, see e.g. Parry 1992: 145.
[121] Nethercot 1931: 269-271. See Chambers and Galbraith 2014: vol. 1, 434-437.
[122] Arponen 2012: 4-5.
[123] Arponen 2012: 5-9.
[124] Arponen 2012: 14-17.
[125] For Evelyn's claims, see Schama 1995: 162. For the exaggerated nature of these claims, Schama 1995: 9-14; Thomas 1991: 198-199; Arponen 2012: 14-16; Theis 2009: 225.

The suspicion that the broader content of *Sylva*, and in particular its association of sylvan with national resurgence, developed independently of the Royal Society, is strengthened when one considers Edmund Waller's *A poem on St. James's Park as lately improved by His Majesty* (1661).[126] Waller was a founding member of the Royal Society and also a long-standing acquaintance of Evelyn and Cowley, the three having been together in Paris in 1646.[127] *A Poem on St. James's Park,* which predates the visit of the naval commissioners to the Royal Society, deploys a number of tropes subsequently found in *Sylva* and *Plantarum* 6, including the association of sylvan life with a primeval Golden Age and with Eden, and the use of trees as a synecdoche for the rebuilt nation.[128]

Over the course of the four editions published in Evelyn's lifetime, *Sylva* gradually supplemented its arboricultural content with material relating to the importance of trees in the historic national culture, with particular reference to their role in pagan religion.[129] Whereas, in the first edition, Pliny provided the majority of citations, later editions quoted extensively from ancient and modern poets, including Cowley himself, whose poem 'The Garden' prefaces the edition of 1679.[130] Of particular interest is the chapter on 'The Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves'. Evelyn quotes (in his own translation) the lines from *Plantarum* 6 on the Druids' reverence for the oak (6.526-530), which Cowley attributes to foreknowledge of Charles II's maritime empire.[131] Evelyn continues, alluding to Cowley's narrative of the Boscobel episode (*Plantarum* 6.932-1022):

> [...] we find the prediction gloriously followed by our ingenious poet, where his Dryad consigns that sacred *depositum* to this monarch of the forest, the oak; than which nothing can be more sublime and rapturous, whilst we must never forget that wonderful Providence which saved this forlorn and persecuted Prince, after his defeat at Worcester, under the shelter of this auspicious and hospitable tree alone.
>
> John Evelyn, 'The sacredness and use of standing groves', 9.[132]

In these later editions of *Sylva,* Evelyn reads the *Plantarum* as sharing his perception of the central role of trees both in the nation's spiritual and cultural history and in its defence, roles which coalesced in the almost mystical preservation of Charles II in the Boscobel oak.

While there certainly was concern about timber stocks in the years following the Restoration, this was by no means a new phenomenon, and Evelyn's insistence on the importance of well-managed forests to the health of the nation belongs to a wider context than that of an immediate naval request.[133] In this context, the shared ethos of *Sylva* and

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[126] Jeffrey Theis has observed that both *On St. James' Park* and *Sylva* 'demonstrate a strain of royalist writing that links political and environmental restoration.' (Theis 2009: 228.)
[127] Nethercot 1931: 97.
[128] The naval commissioners presented their paper on 17 September, 1662 (Arponen 2012: 4).
[129] Evelyn 1664, 1670, 1679, 1706.
[130] Theis 2009: 233-234.
[131] J. Nisbet 1908, vol. 2: 223.
[132] J. Nisbet 1908, vol. 2: 223-224.
[133] Theis 2009: 225; K. Thomas 1991: 198-200.

Plantarum may reflect a *zeitgeist* rather than a particular strand of Royal Society activity, or indeed any literary communication between their respective authors.

The forest which Cowley enters in the opening lines of book 6 is, like so much of the *Plantarum*, a curious blend of classical allusion and modern application, of metapoetical imagery and contemporary political allegory. It represents simultaneously the ancient greenwood of the indigenous Britons, the royal hunting preserve, the metaphorical forest of the literary canon, and the material from which Britain's maritime empire is to be hewn.

5 The Civil War in *Plantarum* 6

In addressing the events of the Civil War and Restoration, Cowley faced equivalent challenges to vernacular writers of the period as they sought to construct a cohesive narrative from the turbulent recent past. Gerald MacLean has observed the 'crisis of textual representation' which marks the literature of the period, as writers attempted to find ways of inscribing the Restoration as both legitimate and inevitable, while Nancy Klein Maguire's writing on early Stuart drama has shown the importance of the genre of tragicomedy in both conveying, in its tragic aspects, the horror of the Civil War and regicide and reflecting the triumph of the Restoration in its ultimate happy ending.[134] David Quint's influential identification of the *Aeneid* with narratives of victory and of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* with those of defeat provides one paradigm for how Civil War and Restoration might be accommodated within poetry of the 1660s; but Virgil and Lucan are also associated with, respectively, Royalism and republicanism, an association which potentially problematises the deployment of Lucan by a Royalist writer.[135]

In this section, I look at Cowley's deployment of Lucanian and Virgilian intertexts, to generate a teleological narrative which celebrates and legitimises the Stuart monarchy. In doing so, I argue that Cowley is particularly interested in the light and shade generated when Virgil and Lucan are in close dialogue, and that his use of classical epic is informed by this dialogue rather than by the ideological associations of either poet. In addressing both the defeat and execution of Charles I and the victory that is the restoration of his son Charles II through engagement with Virgil and Lucan, Cowley attempts to forge a template for the remembering and forgetting of the events of the 1640s and 1650s.[136] The last section of the work, then, represents an act of healing which echoes the Ovidian epigraph to the first two books: *habeo quod carmine sanet et herbis*.[137]

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[134] MacLean 1990: 259; Maguire 1992: 6-10. See also Sawday 1992: 171-173.
[135] Quint 1993: 5-10; Norbrook 1999: 23-62; MacLean 1990: 26-44.
[136] See Neufeld 2013: 1-16; Maguire 1992: 6-10; Sawday 1992: 171-173.
[137] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.397; epigraph to *PLD* and *Poemata Latina*. For the text as an act of healing, compare Shadi Bartsch's reading of Lucan as an enactment of 'the redemptive power of storytelling' (Bartsch 2009: 3).

5.1 *The Civil War*

The second half of *Plantarum* 6 was to be Cowley's third attempt at heroic narrative verse. His English Royalist epic *The Civil War* had been discarded in 1643, while the *Davideis* was abandoned after the completion in English of four of the projected twelve books, with the first also appearing in a Latin version.[138] Of these projects, the three books of *The Civil War* have received a certain amount of scholarly attention, both in their own right and in the context of the renewed interest in the seventeenth-century reception of Lucan.[139] However, Cowley's return to the theme in the last book of the *Plantarum* has not been subjected to an equivalent level of critical scrutiny.[140]

Cowley appears to have begun the three books of *The Civil War* in Oxford during the summer or early autumn of 1643, abandoning the work after the Battle of Newbury in September of that year.[141] Owing much to contemporary newsbooks for its source material, it is a ferociously partisan work which blends epic, elegy and satire to suit the polemical and propagandising requirements of the day.[142] The work is generally regarded as incomplete, the consensus being that it was abandoned when, after Newbury, the ultimate defeat of the Royalist party began to seem certain.[143] Cowley himself claimed to have destroyed the work, famously remarking on the inaptness of making 'laurels for the conquered', though it appears to have circulated in manuscript.[144] While what is now book 1 was published posthumously in 1679, the second two books were discovered only in the 1960s.[145] Critical attention has focused particularly on the blend of Lucanian and Virgilian reference in the opening distych; on the parliament of Beelzebub in book 2; and on the elegy for Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, which closes the work.[146]

Most discussions of *The Civil War* have taken Cowley's later words at face value, focusing on the various reasons why the poet should have felt the completion of the work to

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[138] For the text of *The Civil War* and the circumstances of the rediscovery of the second and third books, see Pritchard 1973. The *Davideis*: Shadduck 1987; Hardie 2012. Pritchard identifies a number of passages from *The Civil War* which were subsequently re-used in the *Davideis* and the *Plantarum*. See Pritchard 1973: 51-55.

[139] Pritchard 1973: 207. For recent discussion, see e.g. MacLean 1990: 177-211; Norbrook 1999: 83-86; Wilcher 2001: 183-192; Power 2007: 141-159; Paleit 2013: 296-305; Trotter 1979: 7-21; De Groot 2004: 160-163; Purkiss 2005: 50-51.

[140] See Hinman 1960: 292-296; Anselment 1988: 180-184; Moul, *EEBO Introductions*.

[141] Pritchard 1973: 15.

[142] For Cowley's source material, see Pritchard 1973: 21-23. For the propagandist function of book 1, see Wilcher 2001: 188.

[143] See e.g. Power 2007: 142.

[144] 'Laurels for the conquered' in the Preface to *Poems*, sig. a4^{r}.

[145] On the circulation of the poem in MS and the rediscovery of books 2 and 3, see Pritchard 1973: 3-10.

[146] The opening: 'What rage does England from it selfe divide/More then Seas doe from all the world beside?' (1.1-2); Beelzebub, 2.365-617; Falkland, 3.529-648. See e.g. MacLean 1990: 120-121; Power 2007: 154-157; Paleit 2013: 296-305. With the elegy for Lord Falkland, Cowley alludes to the Jonsonian tradition via his predecessor's Pindaric Cary-Morison Ode (*Under-wood* 70), addressed to the young Falkland, which opens with an image of the destruction wrought in Italy by the Hannibalic Wars.

be impossible.[147] Some cite issues of genre, arguing that the teleological movement of epic was incompatible with an increasingly likely Royalist defeat; that the work's generic mix was unsustainable; or that it foundered against the impossibility of accommodating contemporary events to heroic poetry, or indeed against the principle which maintained that poetry on historical events was not poetry at all.[148] Cowley's energetic Royalist stance is often felt to result in a lack of subtlety and nuance which doomed *The Civil War* to failure.[149] Thirdly, Cowley's intertextual engagement with classical epic has been criticised for a failure to exploit the tension between Lucanian and Virgilian versions of history, and above all for ignoring what is identified as Lucan's republican thrust.[150] In the following discussion of the civil war narrative of *Plantarum* 6, I show how Cowley's intertextual engagement with Virgil and Lucan, and his sophisticated, classically-inflected, narrative strategy enable him to sidestep issues of genre and partisanship and to construct a cohesive and subtle account of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration.

5.2 Virgil, Lucan and historical epic

At the beginning of *Plantarum* 5, Cowley had linked his shift to the hexameter and his subject of trees to the lofty genre of epic (above, pp. 158-159). Book 6 alludes specifically to Virgilian and Lucanian epic in its opening lines, which begin with an invitation to the Muse:

> Nunc, age, *delicias Hortorum*, Musa, nitentûm
> Desere; nunc obscura tibi, nunc aspera dumis
> (Quà *Phoebus*, Ductor tuus olim, excluditur ipse)
> Per saltus tentanda via, & nemorum invia, restat.
> Eia, age *Venatrix!* densas penetremus in umbras,
> Intima scrutemur viridantum lustra Dearum.

> Come now, my Muse, abandon the refinements of gleaming gardens; the path that awaits your trial is a dark one, overgrown with thickets (one from which Phoebus himself, once your guide, is shut out), through the groves and the trackless parts of the woods. Come, huntress, let's enter the thick shadows, let's seek out the inmost haunts of the green goddesses.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.1-6.
> *Translation: Victoria Moul (with alterations)*.

The forest that Cowley and his Muse are to explore is textual as much as arboreal. The age and impenetrability of this particular forest is also suggestive of the inaccessible, dark and dense Massilian grove of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 3, which in turn references the *antiquam* and *immensam* forest of the Golden Bough and Misenus' funeral in *Aeneid* 6.[151]

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[147] Trotter 1979: 21; Pritchard 1973: 17-18; Norbrook 1999: 83-84; Paleit 2013: 301; Welch 2008: 570.
[148] For an expression of the view that defeat made epic impossible to write (which the author proceeds to critique), see Welch 2008: 570: 'With history taking the wrong side in the conflict, epic poetry itself had become a casualty of the English revolution.' See also Anselment 1988: 164-165; Power 2007: 16, 21; Trotter 1979: 16, 21; MacLean 1990: 26-44, 207-208; Paleit 2013: 54-90
[149] Pritchard 1973: 34; MacLean 1990: 208; Norbrook 1999: 84-85.
[150] Pritchard 1973: 40; Norbrook 1999: 86; Paleit 2013: 297-298 (though Paleit takes issue with the identification of Lucan with republicanism). On the methodology which identifies Virgil with victory and monarchy and Lucan with republicanism and defeat, see also Quint 1993: 5-10; MacLean 1990: 33-35; Norbrook 1999: 23-62.
[151] Lucan's grove has been untouched since the distant past (*longo numquam violatus ab aevo*, 3.399); the branches are dense and tangled (*conexis ramis*, 400); the sun is blocked out (*summotis solibus*,

Allusion to Lucan's grove, destroyed by Caesar, gains a further contemporary resonance through the link between Cromwell and Caesar found in literature of the period.[152]

More prominent is the link between Cowley's *tentanda via* (4) and the opening of *Georgics* 3:

> temptanda uia est, qua me quoque possim
> tollere humo uictorque uirum uolitare per ora
>
> Virgil, *Georgics* 3.8-9.[153]

In the search for novelty which leads Cowley down the untrodden path, the footsteps he follows belong not only to Virgil but to a long line of literary predecessors leading ultimately to Callimachus. These shadows are cast by the forest of the literary canon as the poet forges a new trail through the woods, encountering the trees from an original perspective and struck by their shadows in new ways. Others may have made their way through the literary forest before him, but he is the first to tread this particular path.[154] The metaphor of the path through the dark and hidden parts of the forest aptly renders the daunting nature of Cowley's quest for poetic innovation.

This quest is made even more intimidating by the difficulties inherent in the writing of both historical poetry and narrative epic in the seventeenth century.[155] Cowley's incomplete *The Civil War* and *Davideis*, as well as Davenant's *Gondibert,* have been cited as evidence of the unfeasibility of Royalist epic in the face of defeat and of an inward turn towards romance.[156] For both *The Civil War* and *Plantarum* 6, with their historical narrative of recent events, this difficulty was compounded by a contemporary critical theory which, informed by the Aristotelian and Horatian insistence on mimesis (fiction), was increasingly hardening against recognising narrative historical verse as a fully poetic genre.[157] Lucan's *Bellum Civile* played a central role in this debate as to what constituted poetry, making it impossible for

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401); the local inhabitants are afraid to go there to worship (*non illum cultu populi propiore frequentant*, 422). Lucan's *numquam violatus* chimes suggestively with Cowley's *penetremus* and *intima scrutemur lustra*, which in turn echoes Ovid's deployment of the theme of tree violation as sexual violence in the story of Erysichthon (*Metamorphoses* 8.738-884). See R. Thomas 1988: 261-273. This particular intertextual relationship lies beyond the scope of the present study. Golden Bough: *antiquam silvam*, *Aeneid* 6.179; *silvam immensam*, 186. See Thomas 1988: 268-269; Masters 1992: 25-28.

[152] See (on Marvell's 'Horatian Ode') Norbrook 1999: 247; (on Fisher's *Irenodia Gratulatoria*) Knoppers 2000: 58-64.

[153] See Victoria Moul's discussion of this passage (Moul, *The Neo-Latin Anthology*). Cowley had previously quoted these lines as the epigraph to *Poems*.

[154] See e,g, Harder 1990: 288.

[155] See MacLean 1990: 26-44; Welch 2008: 570-571.

[156] Welch 2008: 570-571. See above, p. 196. On *The Civil War* as failed epic, see also Anselment 1988: 164-5; Power 2007: 145; Trotter 1979: 16, 21; MacLean 1990: 207. Philip Hardie argues for the continued importance of English epic during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, demonstrating the various ways in which the genre was adapted to changed circumstances, and drawing attention to the vigour of neo-Latin epic in this period (Hardie 2015: 225-226, 231-232).

[157] Ancient authorities: Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a, 1459a; Horace, *Ars Poetica* 146-152, 338-339. For detailed discussion of this debate, see MacLean 1990: 26-44; Paleit 2013: 54-90.

Cowley to avoid direct comparison with the earlier model in either his English or his Latin civil war poem.[158]

Cowley's response to the shift towards a more rigorous neo-Aristotelian poetics is to adopt a strategy used by both Virgil and Lucan: that of the *vaticinium ex eventu*, the casting of past events as a prophecy of the future. Tracing its descent from Pindar, the stratagem is deployed strikingly by Virgil in Jupiter's prophecies and Anchises' speech in the *Aeneid,* and by Lucan in the speeches of Nigidius Figulus, the *matrona* in book 1, and the corpse animated by the witch Erictho.[159] Consequently the historical narrative of *Plantarum* 6 is instead presented as a 'reading' of the future by the Dryad, whose personal and emotional response becomes an organic part of that reading, and whose female gendering distances her from the poet.[160] This distance is increased further when Cowley explains that he has only heard her speech at third hand, from Apollo who in turn heard it from the laurel tree (*Plantarum* 6.37-9). Located in this heavily poeticised framework, the story of recent events is distanced generically from conventional historical poetry. It also avoids the overt authorial partisanship of *The Civil War* which, as noted above (p. 195), has been held responsible for a homogeneity of tone and lack of nuance in the earlier work.[161]

5.3 *Plantarum* 6 and the teleological Virgilian narrative

The programmatic opening to book 6 places the restored Stuart monarchy at the heart of the poem. Cowley promises to Charles II a grove, at the centre of which will be an oak tree in which the king can sit enthroned. The tree is explicitly contrasted with the oak in which he hid from Cromwell's soldiers after the Battle of Worcester in 1651: now Charles will ascend the tree in victory, as a spectacle for the whole world:

> Hùc ades, ô *dilecte Deo!* Sacrum tibi lucum
> Pangimus, aeterni pubentem Veris honore.
> Tu mihi, Tu praesens frondosi Carminis ipse
> Numen adesto, tuámque volens hic incole *Quercum,*
> Quam tibi longaevam statuo; non illa latebras
> Perfugiúmque dabit; Sed victor fronde sedebis
> Servatam ob patriam redimitus tempora querna,
> Fulgebísque altus, totíque videberis Orbi.
>
> Come here, O man beloved of God! We set forth a grove sacred to you, flourishing in the glory of eternal spring. Be near me now, yourself a guardian spirit of my leafy song, and, if you will, inhabit your oak here: the long-lived oak I set up for you. She will not offer coverts or

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[158] Lucan: see Paleit 2013: 82-90.
[159] Jupiter: *Aeneid* 1.254-296, 12.829-840; Anchises, *Aeneid* 6.766-853. Nigidius Figulus: BC 1.641-672; the *matrona*: 1.678-694; the corpse: 6.777-820. O'Hara 1990: 128-129. See also Dick 1963: 37-49; Santangelo 2015: 177-188. I focus here on prophecies which refer to historical events rather than to the subsequent unfolding of the narrative, such as those of the Sibyl in *Aeneid* 6 and the harpy Celaeno in 3.
[160] On 'transvestite ventriloquism' in Early Modern English literature, see particularly Harvey 1992: 1-6. Martin Dzelzainis' article on the speech of the Duchess of Albemarle in Marvell's *The Third Advice to a Painter* is particularly suggestive in view of the Duchess' narrative of the Battle of Lowestoft, with which Cowley's Dryad closes her prophecy (Dzelzainis 2007: 111-128).
[161] *The Civil War* and partisanship: Pritchard 1973: 34; MacLean 1990: 208; Norbrook 1990 84-85; Paleit, 2013: 297-298.

refuge in your flight – instead you will be seated in victory. And for saving your native land your temples shall be crowned with leaves of oak. You shall shine on high and the whole world shall see you.

Plantarum 6.18-25.
Translation: Victoria Moul (with alterations).

The allusion is to *Georgics* 3:

primus ego in patriam mecum, modo uita supersit,
Aonio rediens deducam uertice Musas;
primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas,
et uiridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
Mincius et tenera praetexit harundine ripas.
in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit: [...]
ipse caput tonsae foliis ornatus oliuae
dona feram [...]
interea Dryadum siluas saltusque sequamur
intactos, tua, Maecenas, haud mollia iussa:
te sine nil altum mens incohat. [...]
[...] mox tamen ardentis accingar dicere pugnas
Caesaris et nomen fama tot ferre per annos,
Tithoni prima quot abest ab origine Caesar.

Virgil, *Georgics* 3.10-16, 21-22, 40-48.

Thomas May's 1627 translation reads this passage as a statement of intention to write panegyric epic in the future, despite the poet's present determination to remain in the woods and groves of pastoral and georgic:

I first, returning, to my countrey deare
Will from th' Aonian mountaine bring with me
The Muses (live) and first honour thee 3
Mantua, with Idumaean Palmes of praise;
A marble temple in the field Ile raise
Neare to the streame where winding Minclus [sic] flow,
Cloathing his banks with tender reedes, doth flow.
In midst shall *Caesars* altar stand; whose power
Shall guard the Fane; [...]
[...]whilest I
Crown'd with a tender branch of Olive tree
My offerings bring; [...]
Meanewhile let us follow the Woods, and Lands
Vntouch'd; such are, *Maecenas,* thy commands.
My breast, without thee, no high rapture fils; [...]
[...] After of *Caesars* glorious warres Ile sing, 16
And through as many ages spred his praise,
As have already past to *Caesars* dayes.

Thomas May, *Virgil's Georgicks Englished*.[162]

With the reference to the Muses (3), May makes it clear that the honour to Mantua, and consequently the temple to Caesar, are to be literary productions; when May translates Virgil's *accingar dicere* (*Georgics* 3.46) as 'Ile sing' (16), he reinforces the impression that

[162] May 1628: sig. E5^{v}. Line numbers are my own. May's reading concurs with modern scholarly consensus: see R. Thomas 1988: vol. 2, *ad loc*.; L. Wilkinson 1969: 165-72. Similarly, Jacobs Pontanus' *Symbolarum libri XVII Vergilii*, first published in 1599, provides the following gloss on these lines: Aeneidem *pollicetur, cuius lib. 6. genus Augusti, lib. 8. res gestas perstringit* ('he promises the *Aeneid*, whose sixth book contains the family of Augustus, and the eighth book his achievements'). De la Cerda's monumental commentary on the *Georgics* (first published 1607), characteristically, reads the passage literally: see Laird 2002: 178-179. For the contrary view, that the passage prefigures the later parts of the *Georgics*, see Morgan 1999: 50-60.

Caesar's praise is to be celebrated in the form of poetry. With his emphatic 'After' (20), as opposed to Virgil's vague *mox tamen* (*Georgics* 3.46), he strongly implies that the praise of Caesar is a project to be embarked upon only once the present work is complete. This reading of the proposed epic, and the temple which represents it, as a future undertaking contrasts with the practice of Early Modern French poets in their deployment of the Virgilian passage in the trope of Temple of Virtue, which typically collapses this temporal distinction. Ronsard and du Bellay, for example, announce the construction of temples which stand as metaphors for the work currently in progress.[163] Cowley's use of the present tense (*pangimus, statuo*) suggests that, like those of the French poets, his envisaged project is the one immediately at hand. Moreover, given the catalogue of trees and the Stuart panegyric which is to follow, Cowley's grove which will display Charles to the world reads as a clear programmatic statement of the contents of the two books. As a grove of trees dedicated to the monarch, Cowley's monument combines the woods of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* with the marble temple to Augustus that represents the *Aeneid.*

Instead of a temple to Augustus, Cowley plants a tree for Charles; where Virgil visually depicts Roman triumphs, Cowley establishes a grove (18). And Charles, *numen frondosi carminis* (20), is crowned *fronde querna* (23-24), the oak leaves replacing the olive which crowns Virgil at 21 of the *Georgics* passage. Cowley's leafy song becomes Charles' crown of leaves. In the *Plantarum*, trees can be 'read' just as text can; as we shall see, the information these texts contain is poly-valent, encompassing the heroic past and future as well as the more predictable botanic and scientific lore. Cowley thus collapses the distinction between epic and georgic. He also, by implication, presses upon Charles the importance of knowing his trees even as he revels in the celebration of his achievements.

Virgil's temple stands on the banks of the Mincius; Cowley's grove is planted in the forest which he enters in the opening lines. At the end of the introduction, he asks the woodland deities to assist him in bringing light to the forest and interpreting the sounds of the branches and the murmurs of the winds.[164] Read against Lucan's account of the destruction of the Massilian grove, the literary ancestor of Cowley's forest, and Virgil's narrative of Misenus' funeral which in turn informs Lucan, Cowley's lines represent a striking departure from the classical models. Whereas, in Lucan and Virgil, the destruction of trees is an essential part of the creative process, Cowley's emphasis is on the planting of new ones, with a studied vagueness as to how the space for that planting might be found.[165] Through an adroit intertextual sleight of hand, the Virgil of the *Georgics* comes together with that of the *Aeneid* and also with Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, in a single passage: the allusion to *Georgics* 3

[163] See articles by Michael Randall and Stéphanie Robert-Lecompte in Usher and Fernbach 2012. Cowley's familiarity with the French tradition is highly probable, not least given the length of his stay in France (c. 1644-54).
[164] *Plantarum* 6.26-36.
[165] Only when we consider the light that Caesar brings to the Massilian forest by cutting down the trees do we realise that the illumination Cowley claims to bring to the wood must come at a comparable cost. On Caesar as bringer of light, see Leigh 2010: 208-213.

(the temple) is placed in close proximity to the reference to Lucan's Massilian grove, which in turn evokes the funeral of Misenus in *Aeneid* 6. By means of one allusion, Virgil's marble temple is contrasted with Cowley's tree; by means of another, Cowley's tree-planting is contrasted with the strenuous and violent felling of Aeneas' men and of Lucan's Caesar. The dense intertextual relationship at work here militates strongly against a simplistic division between 'Virgilian' and 'Lucanian' reference.

With the oak-leaf crown, Cowley keys Charles to Brutus, legendary ancestor of the Britons, via the oak trees which, in Cowley's version, Brutus planted upon landing. Brutus provides a further link to Virgil: a descendant of Aeneas, he is banished from Italy after accidentally killing his father, and, after extensive wanderings, arrives in Britain.[166] Cowley has Brutus consult the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona, which foretells a glorious imperial future for the Britons (600-606) and, in a detail which does not appear in either Camden's *Britannia* or Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, entrusts to him some acorns which he is instructed to plant on his arrival in his new homeland (608-619).[167] Brutus thus functions as a crucial link between Britain, Troy and Rome and hence between Cowley's text and Virgil's. This link is reinforced by direct allusion: Brutus, like Aeneas, is an exile (571) and distinguished by his *pietas* (574); he is explicitly described as a descendant of Aeneas and given a similar fate (578).[168]

The Dodona acorns function as a further important link between Britain and the ancient world.

> '"Memor esto, atque accipe *Glandes*
> Has ait (implevit porrecto termite dextram).
> Hae tibi erunt longi solamina muta laboris,
> Promissique mei testes; cúmque ubere diti
> Praebebit tua fausta solum *Britannia* dignum,
> Has sere, in immensas crescent haec semina sylvas,
> Et *Quercus* toto celebrabitur orbe *Britanna*;
> *Chaoniam* famâ superabit Filia *Matrem*:
> Tum tu *Brute* mihi gratum instaurabis honorem,
> Instituésque *Patres Druidas*, sanctissima mundi
> Nomina; *Teutates* habitabit Robore in omni,
> Laetáque foelicis vulgò dabit Omina Visci."
>
> "Be mindful, and take these acorns," she said, and, reaching out a branch, filled his right hand. "These will be the wordless comforts of your long travail and witnesses of my promise. When your well-omened Britain, with her rich fertility, provides you with worthy land, sow these, and these seeds will grow into vast woods, and the British oak will be celebrated throughout the whole world. The daughter will surpass in fame her Chaonian mother. Then you, Brutus, will set up a cult to please me, and you will found the Druid fathers, most sacred title in the world. Teutates will dwell in every oak, and will spread abroad the happy omens of the lucky mistletoe."'
>
> *Plantarum* 6.607-623.

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[166] See above, pp. 160, 186.
[167] Geoffrey of Monmouth has Brutus learn of his destiny from the goddess Diana (*Historia Regum Britanniae,* 1.14-15), as does Michael Drayton (Griscom and Jones 1929: 1.14-15; Drayton 1610: Song 1, 403-414).
[168] *exul*, 571; *pietas*, 574; *Aeneae pronepotem*, 577; *similem Aeneae sortem longosque labores*, 'a similar fate to Aeneas, and long labours', 578.

The British oak will be celebrated throughout the world, its fame surpassing that of its Greek mother (614-615); Brutus will honour the Dodona oak and establish the Druidic order (616-617); the Celtic god Teutates will dwell in every oak tree (618).[169] To the close fit between oak and Britain is added the further dimension of explicit classical origin. Even the Druids and the Celtic gods Teutates become effectively Greek, part of the *gratum honorem* which Brutus pays to the Dodona oak and its patron deity, Zeus. Like the trees with which book 6 opened, these acorns can be read as textual metaphors. The oak trees that spring up symbolise the cultural – and, especially, the literary – legacy of the classical world and function as living reminders and guardians of this heritage. With these trees, Cowley makes an important statement of the national character: it is unmistakably British, but at the same time is rooted in classical culture, inheriting and surpassing the heritage of the ancient world just as the British oak trees grow to outshine their Dodona parent. When Charles is protected by the Boscobel oak, the Royalist trees which oppose the Cromwellian usurpation are freighted not only with their strong association with British national identity but also with the cultural legacy of ancient Greece and Rome.

As well as looking backwards to the story of Aeneas, the Brutus episode also carries seventeenth-century resonances. In Cowley's version of the story, Brutus, like Charles II, is an exile with a murdered father, *caesi genitoris regna perosus* (579); Brutus' restoration of the exiled descendants of Priam's son Helenus anticipates Charles' own restoration. The oracle's prophecy of naval empire not only looks forward to the sea-battle with which Cowley will close the work, but also explicitly denotes that empire as comparable with and complementary to that of the descendants of Aeneas:

> '"quicquid complectitur aether
> *Aeneaeque Brutíque* dedêre nepotibus astra,
> *Aeneae Terras* omnes, *Maria* omnia *Bruti*."'
>
> '"the stars have assigned to the line of Aeneas and of Brutus whatever the air embraces, all the lands to the sons of Aeneas, all the seas to those of Brutus."'
>
> *Plantarum* 6.604-606.[170]

The story of the Civil War, Restoration and ensuing naval victories thus becomes closely meshed with that of the fall of Troy, the foundation of Rome and the *imperium sine fine* prophesied at *Aeneid* 1.279.

With the mention of the mistletoe, however, Cowley invokes a tangled intertextual nexus, adding a Lucanian dimension to the existing Virgilian resonances to claim a peculiarly British cast to the cultural tradition. Mistletoe has already appeared in *Plantarum* 1, where it is closely associated with Druidical worship and with the god Teutates, and explicitly compared

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[169] For Teutates, see Lucan, *BC* 444-446.
[170] While it was relatively common for aristocratic and royal dynasties in the Renaissance to claim descent from Aeneas, the emphasis tended to be on continuity rather than complementarity. Cowley here makes a bold claim for the equivalence of Britain and Rome. See Wilson-Okamura 2010: 223.

to the Dodona oak (*Plantarum* 1.1129-1176).[171] Moreover, Cowley's footnote cites Pliny the Elder in connecting the name Druid with the Greek δρῦς, oak, and, in a detail drawn from Lucan though not attributed, states that Teutates and Hesus were the most important Gaulish gods.[172] Lurking behind these references is the Golden Bough, compared by Virgil to mistletoe and identified as such in a number of Renaissance editions, most notably in John Boys' 1661 translation and commentary on *Aeneid* 6.[173]

This intricate allusive web has multiple resonances with the passage in *Plantarum* 6. By keying the Druidical mistletoe to the classical tradition, and above all by alluding to Pliny's etymology, Cowley completes the process started with the legend of Brutus, of, as it were, grafting the British mistletoe onto the classical oak tree. Lucan's barbarian Druids and the savage Celtic deity Teutates, too, are sanitised and brought into the tradition by the sanction of Jupiter as he speaks through the Dodona oak. Discussion of the full implications of the reference to the Golden Bough, with its multiple and contested range of meanings, is beyond the scope of this study.[174] Here, while the allusion helps to give a numinous and talismanic quality to the mistletoe mentioned at the climax of the Dodona oak's prophecy, it can be given a more pointed resonance via Virgil's association of the plant with winter:

> quale solet siluis brumali frigore uiscum
> fronde uirere noua
>
> Virgill, *Aeneid* 6.205-206.[175]

The mistletoe flourishing on the oak tree in the depths of winter becomes an image of hope; for the Royalist Cowley, the *laeta foelicis omina visci* can be read as promises of the political spring of the Restoration.[176]

When Charles II hides in the Boscobel oak after the Battle of Worcester in 1651 (lines 980-1022), the Dryad literalises this image by making mistletoe grow above his head: not only is he taking refuge at the heart of British national identity and culture, but is also, by the very act of climbing the tree, guaranteeing its survival (*Plantarum* 6.1015-1016).[177] Likewise, when Cromwell's men chop down the forest it is an act of cultural vandalism, and moreover one which attempts to sever the classical tradition which descends in an unbroken line from the Trojan War (784-816). Cromwell becomes aligned with Lucan's Caesar, whose desecration of the Massilian grove (*BC* 3.399-452) is both an act of sacrilege and a symbol of

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[171] The Dodona oak is mentioned at 1145-1146.
[172] *Plantarum* 1, footnotes on 1129. Pliny, *NH* 16.45; Lucan, *BC* 1.444-446.
[173] 'Of this there are two kinds, the one common [...]; the other more rare, shooting out of the Oak, and therefore called viscum quercinum, Misleto [sic] of the Oak; and this is meant here by the Poet.' (Boys 1661: n. ad loc.) See Ossa-Richardson 2008: 365. On Boys' Royalist credentials, see Norbrook 1999: 431-432. Golden Bough and mistletoe: *Aeneid* 6.205.
[174] For a range of Renaissance readings of the passage, see Ossa-Richardson 2008: 343-358. On modern scholarly debate, see Horsfall 2013: 154.
[175] De la Cerda is uncomfortable with the phrase *fronde nova*, pointing out that Virgil implies that the plant grows actively through the winter rather than (as is the case) that it is merely evergreen. (De la Cerda 1612: 633b-634a).
[176] On Cowley and the cavalier winter, see above, p. 52.
[177] The mistletoe is again described as *felix omen*, an omen of good fortune.

his impending victory over Pompey.[178] At a structural level, the story of Brutus and the Dodona oak provides a link with the *Aeneid* and with the Trojan War which reinforces the narrative drive towards culmination in the Restoration. However, just as the allusion to Virgil's temple by the Mincius was modulated through reference to Lucan and thus to another Virgilian passage, here the intertextual resonance of the oak tree and the mistletoe also serves to steer the passage towards Lucan's Druids and to the rich associations of the Golden Bough, enabling Cowley to give his narrative a particularly British, and Royalist, cast.

Plantarum 6 is at its most unequivocally Virgilian in the concluding tableau of the Battle of Lowestoft. As the final part of the Dryad's prophecy, it recalls most strongly the depiction of the naval Battle of Actium that closes the description of the Shield of Aeneas (*Aeneid* 8.675-728). Verbal echoes in Cowley's text include *obvertit [...] agmen [...] stans arduus [...] Iacobus*, 'James, standing tall, directs the column' (1154-1156; cf *arduus agmen agens, Aeneid* 8.683); *fumosque flammasque vomens*, 'pouring forth smoke and flames' (1180; cf *geminas cui tempora flammas/laeta uomunt*, *Aeneid* 8.680-681); the detail of the sea growing red with blood (*Plantarum* 6.1200; cf. *Aeneid* 8.695); and, most tellingly, the allusion by both poets to the horns of the river Rhine at the very end of the respective passages (*submittit cornua Rhenus*, 'the Rhine lowers its horns', *Plantarum* 6.1226; *Rhenusque bicornis*, *Aeneid* 8.727). And, while Lucan offers a model for a sea-battle in his account of the battle off Massilia, Cowley avoids the graphic and horrific anatomical detail that characterises the *Bellum Civile* passage, focusing on the fate of the ships rather than on the individuals who man them.[179]

It has often been remarked that Virgil's Actium passage aims to recast the culminating conflict of a civil war as a struggle with a foreign enemy.[180] For seventeenth-century writers, too, civil war was 'a war without an enemy', 'a war without a victor'.[181] By looking ahead to the Battle of Lowestoft – which, unlike Actium, actually was a battle against a foreign enemy – and by side-stepping the potential Lucanian model, Cowley attempts to elide the shame and horror of civil war into his triumphalist prediction of English maritime power. Even here, however, Cowley injects a note of uncertainty which undermines the function of the tableau as a teleological end-point. Immediately after the shield ecphrasis in *Aeneid* 8, Aeneas dons his armour *ignarus rerum*, a detail which draws attention to the shield as constructed artefact and which highlights the distance between the knowing reader and the uncomprehending hero.[182] Similarly, Cowley closes with a recognition of his own limitations: *Sed post me genitis dii tanta trophaea reservant,/Et celebranda dabunt melioribus illa poetis* (1229-1230). As at the end of *Aeneid* 8, the poet reminds his reader of the

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[178] Masters 1992: 25-29; Rosner-Siegel 1983: 175-176.
[179] On the description of the battle off Massilia, gruesome even by Lucanian standards, see Leigh 1997: 249-250.
[180] See e.g. Syme 1939: 270, 275; Galinsky 1996: 82; Farrell and Nelis 2013: 3-4; Quint 1993: 21-31.
[181] See Power 2007: 147-150; MacLean 1990: 210; Anselment 1988: 160-165.
[182] *Aeneid* 8.730. This passage continues to generate discussion. See e.g. Grandsen 1976: *ad loc.*; Putnam 1998: 119-188; Feldherr 2014; Boyle 1999: 159-161; Fratantuono 2007: 256-257.

unknowability of the future. In Virgil, this reminder operates through a change of focalisation from omniscient poet-narrator, telling of the events of the recent past, to Aeneas, who is operating in a prehistory far removed from that of the poet and his readers. Cowley, like Virgil, begins with the events of the recent past, but instead confronts a future whose details are hidden from both poet and audience. Like Aeneas, Cowley peers into the unknown, acknowledging, however disingenuously, his poetic limitations (*melioribus poetis*) in a diminuendo which contrasts sharply with the confident comparisons with Virgil at the opening of *Plantrum* 6.

Like the reminder of the shield's constructed quality in *Aeneid* 8, the reintroduction of the persona of the poet in the *Plantarum* draws attention to the fictive nature of the Dryad's speech and highlights the poet's separation from his narrator. This separation is reinforced by the contested literary representation of the Battle of Lowestoft itself. On the one hand, Dryden's celebration of the battle in *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), which uses the analogy of Rome's defeat of Carthage, and Edmund Waller's panegyric *Advice to a Painter* (1666) present the battle as a British triumph; in contrast, the anonymous satires *Second* and *Third Advice to a Painter* (1666) and Marvell's *The Last Instructions to a Painter*, highlighted the mismanagement of the British navy and the corruption of the Restoration court.[183] Cowley's switch of focus at the end of his account of the battle follows Virgil in drawing attention to the limitations of Aeneas/Cowley; but it also, like the *Instructions to a Painter* satires, draws attentions to the different ways in which a story may be told, and highlights the unstable nature of representation itself.

5.4 Lucan, Cowley and civil war

To an extent, then, Cowley's use of his Virgilian intertext can be accommodated to Quint's association of Virgil with a teleological narrative that culminates in victory. Correspondingly, one function of the Lucanian voice is as a means of distinguishing a second strand, one which addresses the horror of civil war and the tragedy of the regicide and which is broadly analogous to Quint's 'losers' epic'.[184] In his narrative of the violence and bloodshed of the 1640s and 1650s, Cowley draws heavily on Lucan to develop a discourse which can serve as a means of lodging the painful memories of recent events within his overall framework.

Cowley's civil war, like Lucan's, is heralded by a series of grisly portents: instead of mistletoe, oak trees bear oak-apples which hatch gall-wasps, murmuring curses; the wood seethes as though with a fever, emitting a sound like human groaning; foul birds appear in

[183] Smith 2007: 323. See further Smith 2007: 323-327 on the authorship and dating of these poems.
[184] Quint 1993: 8-9.

the trees.[185] It also begins with the crossing of a river: the Bishops' War of 1639-40 becomes a cloud from Scotland, which, in an echo of Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, transgresses the boundary formed by the river Tweed.[186] This cloud, with its *ferali umbra*, 'hellish shadow', is dispersed by an *argenteus imber*, a 'rain of silver' (638, alluding to the English payment of Scottish expenses). However, civil war will follow:

> [...] sed prodigus emptor
> Nunc Pacis populus, scelerata infandáque bella
> Mox pluris Civilia Emet:
>
> [...] but a people now extravagant in their purchase of peace, and who will soon buy villainous and shameful civil war for a greater price
>
> *Plantarum* 6.640-642.

The gruesome language of *ferali, scelerata* and *infanda* is typical of the heightened discourse associated with Lucan by Early Modern writers; with *bella pluris civilia*, Cowley alludes firmly to the *bella plus quam civilia* of *BC* 1.1.[187]

Soon all England is in the grip of civil war:

> *Albion* infelix, quae te saevissima Serpens
> *Eumenidum*, quaenam, ô, *Haemorrhois* ore momordit.
> Omnia membra fluunt stillantibus undique Venis,
> Tantum, támque ingens, Totum est pro Vulnere Corpus.
>
> Unlucky Albion, what most vicious Serpent of the Furies, O, what Haemorrhois has bitten you with its mouth. All your limbs have become fluid, your veins dripping on all sides, and so great and so huge a body is all one single wound.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.668-670.

Underlying this image is the serpent of Eden, who here turns on its victim; but Cowley also powerfully echoes the snake attack on Cato's desert march in *BC* 9. Significantly, one of these snakes is the Haemorrhois; the phrase *totum est pro Vulnere corpus* (652 above) is quoted directly from *BC* 9.814.[188] Whereas Lucan's venomous snakes are real ones, Cowley's are metaphorical, particularly the Haemorrhois of civil war, whose bite is inflicted not directly and literally on human soldiers, but on England herself. Blood flows from all her veins as war is enacted all over the country, in an image which perhaps – particularly given the Lucanian context – suggests Stoic suicide.

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[185] Gall-wasps: *obscuro mussabat murmure diras*, 'muttered curses in an indistinct humming', 6.124; the wood: *subita quasi febre laborans*, 'as though struggling under a sudden fever', 125; groaning: *Humano similem gemitu*m, 'a groan like that of people', 129; birds*: obscenae volucres*, 'obscene birds', 130-1. Compare Lucan's dire portents at *BC* 1.524-580 and 7.152-180.

[186] Lucan, *BC*, 1.183-227; *Plantarum* 6.630-635. See Masters 1992: 1-3; Bartsch 2009: 13-15.

[187] See Paleit 2013: 7-8.

[188] Modern readers find the sequence of grisly deaths macabre even by Lucan's standards, and are unclear as to whether it should be read as extolling Cato's Stoic values or revealing their limitations. For a discussion of a range of modern responses to the passage, see Bartsch 1997: 29-35.

On one reading of Lucan's passage, Cato's Stoic virtue is highlighted as he urges impassive acceptance of the snakebite; on another, the anguished sufferings of his men point up the inadequacy of Stoic endurance in the face of genuine catastrophe.[189] Cowley's passage combines Lucanian Stoicism with the Christian concept of original sin: the serpent of civil war becomes self-inflicted, the Haemorrhois unleashed by England herself. The blood that gushes from England's veins as she lies, bleeding and hopelessly divided by the events of the 1630s and 1640s, represents the outcome of England's own sin, an act of expiation for the civil war which England has generated and which now rages unchecked.[190] It is also figured as a suicide, one whose ethical status is complicated and made ambiguous by its Lucanian associations.[191]

The image of the 'body politic' recurs in the passage describing events after the regicide, where Britain is compared to a headless corpse devoured by worms, insects and snakes, (748-790), an image prefigured in the portent of the gall-wasps on the oak trees (123-124). Here the trope is used somewhat differently: the assailants are firmly external agents, with Cromwell explicitly identified as *Serpentum maximus* (the greatest of Serpents, 758). The metaphor of a nation as a body with the king as its head is of course a familiar one in early modern discourse; here, Cowley's admixture of Lucanian detail gives a particularly macabre twist to the traditional trope:[192]

> Ecce, loco Unius tunc membra regentis,
> Mille scatent viles Animae, fervéntque tumultu,
> (Terrae putris soboles, ignobile vulgus)
> Vermiculi genus omne, acrique Insecta veneno,
> Serpentésque atri, et *Serpentum maximus*, ipsas
> *Cromuellus* rabido depascitur ore Medullas.
> Foedus odor toto latè diffunditur orbe.

> Look, in the place of the single soul then ruling the body, a thousand mean ones bubble up, and seethe in disarray, (the fetid offspring of the earth, the base-born commons) every kind of worm, and insects with poisoned sting, and dark serpents, and the greatest of serpents, Cromwell, feeds on the very marrow with ravening mouth. The vile stench is spread abroad through the whole world.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.754-760.

5.5 Virgil, Lucan and Cowley

Thus far I have argued that Cowley deploys Virgilian allusion to shape the teleological arc of his narrative, while invoking grotesque and vivid Lucanian diction to convey the horror of civil war. At various points in book 6, however, he reveals an awareness of the pre-existing intertextual relationship between his classical predecessors, using the interplay between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile* to striking effect. A particularly powerful example occurs in Cowley's use of the metaphor of decapitation as tree-felling, where allusions to

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[189] Fantham 1992; Leigh 1997: 265-266.
[190] See especially Sawday 1990: 127-143.
[191] On Lucan's problematisation of suicide see Leigh 1997: 269-279
[192] See especially Sharpe 1989: 61-62.

Virgil's Priam and Lucan's Pompey display a sensitivity to the extent to which each is already embedded in the other.[193]

Cowley signals the allusion to Priam/Pompey when, in a synecdoche which equates king with country, he compares a post-regicide Britain to a headless corpse:

> Non agnoscendum iacet atque informe *Cadaver*,
> *Immanis* sine Mente, Animáque & Nomine *Truncus*.
>
> She lies, an unrecognisable and shapeless corpse, a huge trunk without mind, soul and name.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.750-751.

The language strongly evokes Priam's corpse in *Aeneid* 2:

> Iacet ingens litore truncus,
> Auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.
>
> Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.557-558.

Lucan refers to the *truncus* of Pompey's decapitated body in his account of his murder (8.536-691), as well as in the prophecy of the frenzied *matrona* which closes book 1:

> Hunc ego, fluminea deformis truncus harena
> Qui iacet, agnosco.
>
> Lucan, *BC* 1.685.

Priam and Pompey both serve as examples of greatness brought treacherously low; both represent legitimate and long-standing forms of government toppled by the upstart pragmatists Neoptolemus and Caesar. The potentially jarring incongruity of Pompey's republicanism is smoothed over by the alignment with the monarch Priam, with the emphasis resting rather on the cruel indignity of all three deaths. A further function of the allusion is to compensate for the Dryad's inability to narrate the regicide by directing the reader towards Lucan's comprehensive account of the death of Pompey, which includes Pompey's own courage in the face of death (*BC* 8.613-636), the lament of his wife Cornelia (637-662) and his decapitation (663-691). Cowley invites his reader to supply the details which his own narrator cannot bring herself to relate.

Pompey informs Cowley's portrayal not only of Charles I but also of his son and successor. I have already shown how Cowley uses the oak as an emblem of his celebration of Charles II, and how Brutus' planting of the acorns symbolizes an English cultural and national heritage which stretches back to the classical world. What then are we to make of Lucan's famous simile of Pompey as an oak tree, outwardly healthy but rotten at the roots? The fit between Pompey and oak trees in Lucan is comparable to that between the Stuarts

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[193] On this intertextual relationship, see particularly Hinds 1998: 8-10. On Priam and Pompey, see Bowie 1990: 473-481.

and oak trees in Cowley.[194] But this image of a tree hung with memorials to the past, putting out no new growth yet revered in preference to the healthy trees around it, is hardly in keeping with Cowley's depiction of a revived and restored Stuart monarchy.

Discussion of the Lucan passage has focused on the tree as a fundamentally inward-looking representation of the past which allows no possibility of regrowth or regeneration.[195] Cowley, on the other hand, looks forward to the future when he invokes the *longaevam* (long-lived) oak which he plants for Charles II (line 22). Similarly, with the Dryad's reference to a particular oak as being descended from one sprung from Brutus' Dodona acorns, the emphasis is on the cycle of succession which connects past and present. The leafless branches of Pompey's oak (*BC* 1.139-140) contrast with the foliage which crowns Charles at *Plantarum* 6.23-4 and with the luxuriant growth with which the Dryad fashions him a canopy in the Boscobel oak. Furthermore, whereas Pompey's oak is venerated despite the more deserving trees which flourish in its vicinity (*BC* 1.141-143), so evident is the splendour of Charles in the Boscobel oak that the other trees make spontaneous obeisance (1018-1019).

Just as Cowley modulates Virgil through Lucan, so here a Virgilian passage underlies and modifies a Lucanian allusion. Lucan's simile of the oak tree is reinforced by contrast with Virgil's comparison of Aeneas to an unbending oak in book 4, and, by further extension, to the deep-rooted and long-lived oak in the *Georgics*.[196] The Virgilian oak has roots which stretch down as far as its visible growth extends upwards; it withstands the onslaught of the wind; the *Aeneid* oak is aged, but strong; the oak in the *Georgics* outlasts many generations of men.[197] As such, these oaks are a much more appropriate pattern for the oak of the Stuart dynasty than the enfeebled and decaying tree of Pompey. We have seen above how the Dryad's story of Brutus sets up a three-way correspondence between Brutus, Aeneas and Charles II; here, a similar relationship is in play, though one with a contrast rather than a correspondence at its heart. Through the relationship between the immediate model of the Lucan simile and the Virgil passage which underlies it, Cowley reinforces the similarity between Charles and Aeneas via the contrast of both with Pompey.

The acorns planted by Brutus represent a past which is an organic part of both the present and the future, as represented by the oaks of the Stuart dynasty and of Cowley's grove in the proem. And while Lucan's epic depicts the annihilation of one regime in order to give place to a new one, Cowley's poem celebrates a restoration, a reincorporation of an heroic classical past which can be brought forward into a glorious future, just as, on one

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[194] See e.g. Masters 1992: 27; Rosner-Siegel 1983; Feeney 1986: 239.
[195] Thorne 2011: 363-381.
[196] *Aeneid*. 4.441-446; *Georgics* 2.288-297. See Rossi 2000: 573-574. On the link between the two similes, see Briggs 1980: 35-38.
[197] *quantum uertice ad auras/aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit*, *Aeneid* 4.445-446, *Georgics* 2.291-2; *non flabra neque imbres/conuellunt*, *Georgics* 2.293-294; *Alpini Boreae*, *Aeneid* 4.442; *annoso ualidam [...] robore quercum, Aeneid* 4.441; *multosque nepotes/multa uirum uoluens durando saecula uincit*, *Georgics* 2.294-5.

reading of the *Aeneid*, the principate of Augustus represented the culmination of a story which stretched all the way back to Troy. Pompey's moribund oak thus presents a stark contrast with the vigorous new growth of the tree which Cowley will plant in order to display the restored Charles II to the world.

Priam's *truncus* in *Aeneid* 2, Pompey's in the *Bellum Civile*, and Charles I/Britain's in the *Plantarum* are all trees which have been cut down; and deforestation on a wider scale features in all three texts.[198] Here, too, Cowley's treatment of the theme is informed by Lucan's reading of Virgil. We saw above how the dark wood with which *Plantarum* 6 opens draws on both Lucan's grove and on the *silvam immensam* of *Aeneid* 6; Cowley's Forest of Dean, the setting for book 6, is a similarly numinous location, with the woodland deities inhabiting the tiny remnant spared the axe (6.166-170). When Cromwell plunders the forest, Cowley contrasts past *religio* with present pragmatism (801).

The despoliation of the forest under the Protectorate is described in terms which evoke the sack of a city as, with powerful use of personification, Cowley describes how the *barbarus victor* ('barbarian victor', 804), plunders and burns, destroying young and old alike and making no distinctions as to species (*genus*, 806 – also used to denote 'race'). As the Hamadryads weep silent tears (for, Cowley explains, deities should not lament audibly, 813-814), the text recalls Lucan's Gauls, groaning as they witness the destruction (*BC* 3.445-446). There is Virgilian allusion too, with Cowley's detail of the birds fleeing their nests (6.809-811) recalling the forest in the *Georgics*, cut down to make way for ploughland (*Georgics* 2.207-211).[199]

The passage is further enriched by classical allusion, most notably to the sack of Troy: when Cowley introduces the passage with the announcement *'Tunc scitote diem vestrum, et lacrymabile fatum/Sylvarum venisse'* (Then know that your day is come, and the lamentable fate of the Woods), 795-796, there is a strong echo of Hector's words to Aeneas when he advises him that Troy is doomed: *venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus/Dardaniae* ('the final day has come and the inescapable moment of Troy'), *Aeneid* 2.323-324. While Virgil compares his collapsing city to a falling tree (*Aeneid* 2.626-631), here, Cowley compares his falling trees to a sacked city. The reversal underlines the equation of trees with text and of the forest with the cultural tradition; it also brings further into play the relationship between trees and literature in Virgil and, particularly, Lucan.

We saw above how Cowley elided the felling of trees necessary to clear the space for his own grove; here, the hewing down of the forest becomes an act of barbarian violence which is implicitly contrasted to the benign planting of literary creation. Such is his

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[198] Virgil: R. Thomas 1988: 261-273; Gowers 2011: 87-118; Quartarone 2002; Hinds 1998: 11-14. Lucan: Masters 1992: 26-29, 35-36; Leigh 2010.
[199] On these lines, see R. Thomas 1988: 272-273.

determination to maintain these negative associations that he even suggests that the building of ships is the result of a voluntary action by the trees themselves:

> Linque tuas *porcis* glandes, ditissima Quercus,
> Linque volens; homini quicquid parit undique terra,
> Et quáscunque ostentat opes, quáscunque recondit,
> Conquiris donásque;
>
> Leave your acorns to the pigs, wealthiest oak tree, leave them willingly; whatever earth, in all her parts, brings forth for mankind, and whatever riches she displays, and whatever she conceals, you seek out and present;
>
> *Plantarum* 6.492-495.

In the portrayal of Cromwell's attack on the forest Cowley strenuously resists any suggestion in Virgil and Lucan that tree-felling may have have a beneficial outcome or that the forest will regenerate itself.[200] Cowley's trees are vulnerable to attack; his forests susceptible to a destruction as complete as that of Troy; the cultural inheritance symbolised by Brutus' oak trees can be annihilated by Parliamentarian philistinism. Only thanks to the continued existence of the obscure wood of Boscobel can Charles II escape Cromwell's man-hunt and be kept safe for his triumphant return.

5.6 Conclusion

Quint's identification of a teleological Virgilian epic style remains a useful approach to Cowley's engagement with Virgil and Lucan in *Plantarum* 6. The overarching narrative of reversal and triumph is keyed to the *Aeneid*, through the programmatic opening, the paralleling of Charles II with Aeneas, and the emphasis on a cultural continuum deriving ultimately from Troy. Equally, Cowley found in Lucan a means of depicting the bloody horrors of civil war in a way related to the Quintian 'epic of defeat'. However, these essentially polarising approaches fail to acknowledge the complexity and nuance of Cowley's intertextualism, in which close reading of both Virgil and Lucan generates a dense allusive web of echo and dissonance. Through this allusive web, and above all through the complex ramifications of the trope of trees and text, Cowley stresses the cultural continuity between his classical predecessors, and fashions Charles II as guarantor of that heritage.

6 Britain and America in *Plantarum* 5-6

> Herculeas metas inter magnique Columbi
> Fulvum orbem
>
> Between the pillars of Hercules and the golden world of great Columbus
>
> *Plantarum* 5.13-14.

Various factors – paratextual, structural, and thematic – encourage the reading of books 5 and 6 as a pair. They are presented as such in *Poemata Latina*, where the six books

[200] On Lucan's forest as a self-renewing resource, see Masters 1992: 28-29.

are itemised as *Duo HERBARUM, FLORUM, SYLVARUM*, a division followed by Sprat in *De Vita* and *Life*. Both are in hexameters; both depict an assembly of trees followed by an extended prophetic speech; and both prophecies foretell disasters in the immediate future which will give way to triumphant success in the longer term. Taking these broad parallels as a starting-point, we can see other distinctive features of the two books which encourage a reading of each as the doublet of the other. In this section, I shall argue that Cowley uses the New World as a proxy for Britain, and that the Spanish rape of America becomes analogous to the Civil War and the depredations of the Interregnum. As a result of this identification, it becomes possible to read Apollo's prophecy of imperial destiny at the end of book 5 as an anticipation of the Dryad's prophecy of the glorious future of Stuart Britain at the end of 6.

Cowley first signals this by his choice of setting. Locating his Fortunate Isle between the Pillars of Hercules and the American continent, he opens up the possibility that he is referring not, as is usually supposed, to Bermuda or Tenerife, but to the island of Britain herself.[201] The reading of Britain as 'another world' has a long literary pedigree, stretching back at least as far as Virgil's *penitus toto diuisos orbe Britannos* (*Eclogues* 1.66) and persisting in classical literature until well after the island's conquest and its circumnavigation.[202] It remained current in Early Modern English literature, where a Britain divided from the world was – literally – mapped onto the ancient mythical locations of Thule, the Fortunate Isles, the Hesperides, the Isles of the Blest, and Homer's Ogygia.[203] Significantly, the miraculously temperate climate of Cowley's island is found in a number of Early Modern English identifications of Britain with the Fortunate Isles. Thus Camden, at the opening of *Britannia* (1586):

> Opulenta haec Britanniae ubertas et beata amoenitas fidem fecit nonnullis Fortunatas illas sive Beatorum Insulas, in quibus omnia perpetuo vere ridere scribunt poetae, apud nos fuisse.
> William Camden, *Britannia* 6.[204]

The motif is found also in the work of Michael Drayton, the title of whose *Poly-Olbion* (1612) puns on the Greek ὄλβιος, 'happy' or 'blessed' and Albion. The opening of the work resonates strongly with Cowley's description of the Fortunate Isles:

> Of Albion's glorious isle the wonders whilst I write,
> The sundry varying soiles, the pleasures infinite
> (Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
> The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great,
> Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
> The Summer not too short, the winter not too long)
> Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, First Song, 1-6.[205]

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[201] Bermuda: Hinman 1960: 286; Hofmann 1994: 628. Tenerife: Monreal 2010: 244, 272, 296.
[202] See Romm 1992: 140-141.
[203] Bennett 1956: 117.
[204] Camden 1586.
[205] Text from *The Poly-Olbion Project* (University of Exeter).

Relevant too is Ben Jonson's masque, *The Fortunate Isles and Their Union* (1625), whose central theme is the union of Britain under James I. These and other examples, painstakingly cited in Josephine Bennett's article, enable Cowley's text to imply a British setting right up until the closing lines of the passage:

> Hìc locuples nullis conturbat Mensibus Arbor,
> Sed frondes simul & flores, fructúsque ferentem
> Omnis laeta videt, videt omni *Cynthia* vultu.
> Plurima nec tribuens, quaedam negat invida more
> Nostrati; hic *eadem semper fert omnia tellus*:
>
> In no months here does the wealthy tree fail, but every moon with every aspect happily sees her bearing leaves and flowers and all kinds of fruits, all at the same time. Nor in rendering so much does she jealously withhold other things, in the manner of our native land: here, the earth bears all the same things at all times.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.27-31.

Cowley's setting of his divine festival in the west also calls to mind Virgil's use in the *Aeneid* of the term *Hesperia* – the western land – to denote Italy and the mythical island of the Hesperides, a locus also linked with Britain and one which moreover had come to have strong Royalist associations.[206] Characterically, however, Cowley shies away from overt identification of Britain with the Hesperides: his golden apples are explicitly oranges and lemons, which will not grow outdoors even in the temperate climate of Britain.

Cowley's adherence to the Early Modern emphasis on Britain as a world apart helps to identify Britain with the New World; it also distinguishes it from Europe and hence from Spain. Several times the text explicitly designates Britain as separate from continental Europe. At the beginning of book 6 the Caroline peace is contrasted with a Europe in the grip of the Thirty Years' War (6.47-50); Britain's island character is emphasised at 6.521-525 and 1126-1135.

Britain and America also follow parallel historical trajectories. Cowley envisages for both Britons and Amerindians a prehistory characterised by the rustic self-sufficiency of Virgil's Golden Age as depicted in *Georgics* 1 and *Aeneid* 7 and 8. It is not only Cowley's Amerindians who have features in common with Virgil's Italians (above, p. 173): in his account of early Britain, he alludes to Evander's oak-born men at *Aeneid* 8.314-315, giving his first Britons a Golden Age existence living under the shadow of the oak tree and feeding on acorns:

> Foelix illa aetas mundi iustissima Nymphe,
> Cùm dabat umbra domum vivam tua, cùm Domus ipsa
> Deciduâ Dominos pascebat fruge quietos,
> Soláque praebebant sylvestria poma secundas
> Gramineis epulas mensis;

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[206] Hesperia in the *Aeneid*: see e.g. 3.163, 8.77. For the island of the Hesperides identified with Britain, see Bennett 1956: 27-28, 117; Connolly and Cain 2011: 16; Coiro 1985: 311-336.

> That was the world's prosperous age, most just Nymph, when your shadow gave a living home, when the home itself fed its tranquil masters with the harvest that fell from the trees, and forest fruits alone provided pleasant banquets on tables of grass;
>
> *Plantarum* 6.456-460.

Moreover, an equivalence between Amerindians and ancient Britons is found in some Early Modern literature and iconography, in which the state of Britain before the Roman conquest is likened to that of pre-Columban America.[207] The Britons of the Caroline peace are linked with both Amerindians and Virgilian Italians via the shared Golden Age imagery; the link also functions in the case of ancient Britons through their shared pre-colonial primitivism. This triangular relationship serves to strengthen the connection between Britain and the New World.

The rustic idyll is abruptly and violently terminated, by Spanish conquest in the case of America, by the Roman invasion in the case of ancient Britain, and for seventeenth-century Britain by the Civil War, which Cowley attributes wholly to the fickleness of Charles I's subjects (*taedet tandem esse beatos*, 'at last they grew tired of being happy', 6.58). Spanish greed for American gold finds a parallel in the ruthless deforestation of the Cromwellian regime and Cowley's use in both cases of imagery of the sacking of cities, with specific reference to Troy (above, p. 177). To the triangular relationship between Britain, America, and early Italy, we can add a second one, that of Britain, America, and Troy.

Before returning to the implications of these two relationships, I shall complete this survey of historical process in books 5 and 6 by considering the future. As we have seen, Apollo – whatever his underlying motives – prophesies a glorious destiny for the New World (above, p. 160). Book 6 also ends with a prophecy of imperial glory, this time from the Dryad, who foretells the British naval and commercial empire heralded by the Restoration.

> Ipse [Charles II] dabis Ponto morémque ac iura frementi,
> Ipse indignantem claudes, humilémque recludes,
> Tu *Dominus* mundi & *Neptunus* habeberis udi,
> Et tibi erunt Tria Regna *Tridens*.

> You yourself will give laws and manners to the raging sea, you will close it up when it is resentful and open a way when it is humble, you will be considered the master and the Neptune of the world of water, and three kingdoms will be your trident.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.1122-1125.[208]

Both Britain and the New World thus pursue a narrative arc which extends from primitive rusticity, through violent destruction, to imperial triumph. Any apparent inconsistency is elided via Cowley's chronological vagueness: while Charles' empire will reach its peak some

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[207] 'Ancient Britaines Depicted', Kinney 2007.

[208] On Cowley's use of Virgilian half-lines, see Power 2007: 143-149. The elevated tone climactic function of these lines is reinforced by their allusion both to the end of Anchises' speech in *Aeneid* 6 (*pacique imponere morem/parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, 852-853) and to Jupiter's prophecy of the closing of the gates of Janus in *Aeneid* 1 (*cana Fides, et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus/iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis/claudentur Belli portae*, 292-294. The verb *fremet* is used of the personified *Furor* at 296.).

thirteen hundred years in the future (6.1115-1116), the empire of America is specified only as *sera*, 'late in time' (5.1194).

To borrow David Quint's formulation, then, Cowley's narrative of both Britain and America is, like the *Aeneid*, a story in which losers become winners.[209] However, the identification of Britons and Amerindians with Trojans, Greeks and Italians is slippery and shifting. Just as Aeneas and his men may at different times recall both Homer's defending Trojans and their Greek assailants, and Turnus combines aspects of both Menelaus and Hector, so do Cowley's Britons and Amerindians reflect both the imperial destiny of Aeneas and the defeat of the Iliadic Trojans and the Virgilian Latins.[210] I shall return to this theme in the final section.

6.1 *Quercus Dracana*[211]: Britain, Spain and the conquest of the New World

Although Britain had by the 1660s established a significant presence on the eastern seaboard of the modern United States, Cowley's account of the New World concentrates exclusively on Mesoamerica, and specifically the territory first encountered by the Spanish conquistadors. This focus, which one might initially find surprising, is in fact standard in European New World literature. The Spanish writers who produced the majority of literary treatments of America naturally paid most attention to areas of Spanish influence, whence came the first eyewitness accounts. But reasons for the absence of North America – with the exception of Bermuda – in English literature are less immediately obvious.[212] Anthony Pagden has argued that European encounters with the indigenous peoples of North America simply did not lend themselves to the epic treatment that was the favoured mode of discourse in writing about the New World.[213] Moreover, Karen Ordahl Kupperman has shown that England's North American colonies were at this stage viewed only as a staging post en route for the main prize: the wresting of the rich territories of Central and Southern America from Spanish – Catholic – control.[214] This was the ultimate aim of Cromwell's 'Western Design', the ill-fated expedition of 1654 which succeeded only in taking Jamaica at enormous cost.[215]

The traditional British self-definition in opposition to a cruel and heretical Spain was sharpened during the Interregnum. Advocates of the Western Design sought to emphasise the providentialist aspect of Cromwell's imperialist ambitions, arguing that the American expedition acted as God's instrument in expelling the Catholic Spaniards. It is in this context that we should read both the translation by Milton's nephew John Phillips of de las Casas'

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[209] Quint 1993: 51-53.
[210] For the complexity of allusion to the Trojan War and the related theme of the Gigantomachy in the *Aeneid*, see Anderson 1957; Gransden 1984; Reed 2009: 45-72.
[211] *Plantarum* 6.509.
[212] Bermuda: Marvell, 'Bermudas', from *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681; Smith 2007); Waller, 'The Battle of the Summer Islands' (1645; Drury 1901).
[213] Pagden 1995: 65-66.
[214] Kupperman 1988: 72.
[215] Kupperman 1988: 96-97; Armitage 1992: 540-542; Greenspan 2010: 7-11.

Tears of the Indies and Davenant's American operas, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* and *Sir Francis Drake*.[216] While the failures of the 1650s made Restoration writers wary of overt expressions of militaristic imperial ambitions, the drama of the period is nonetheless suffused with the discourse of empire; and imperialism lay at the heart of Britain's aspirations to maritime and commercial supremacy.[217]

In the light of this contemporary discourse, a submerged imperialist agenda starts to become visible in *Plantarum* 5 and 6. Cowley is careful to avoid any mention of direct contact between Britain and America: Raleigh is completely absent, and Drake appears, not in book 5 but in 6, as an explorer, a Columbus not a conquistador:

> At *Quercus Dracana* tuos imitata labores
> *Phoebe*, tuo digna est solius carmine dici.
> Sit sidus *Pagasaea Ratis*, post tempora vitae
> Et cursum aequoreae Coelestis fulgeat instar
> *Arietis*; haec Puppis totum circùm acta per orbem
> Sideris officio iamdudùm & in aequore functa est.
>
> But Drake's oak, imitating your labours, Phoebus, is worthy to be told in your song alone. Let the ship from Iolcos become a star, after the season and the course of its life afloat, let it shine like the heavenly Ram: this ship, steered around the whole world, has for a long time now performed the function of a star even on the sea.
>
> *Plantarum* 6.509-513.[218]

The comparison with the Argo (*Pagasaea ratis*, 511), and the mention of the constellation of Aries, the Ram, serves as a reminder of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece and subtly evokes the gold of the New World.[219] Raleigh insisted on his difference from the Spaniards in order to replace their dominion with his own, albeit by less violent means; here, too, English imperial ambition is disguised as the nobler pursuit of exploration and discovery.[220]

The mention of Drake occurs in the course of Cowley's long eulogy of the English oak, in which seafaring, commerce and the *imperium maris* of Charles II are closely intertwined. It is the English oak which provides the ships that both protect the island against aggressors (524-525) and carry goods over the whole world (494-500). While the ships' military function results in *imperium maris* (531) and the commercial one in a *respublica* (499), the centrality of the oak to both results in a slippage between the two: the world becomes a *respublica*, in which *omnis nunc possidet omnia terra*, only in the sense in that British naval dominion has in effect established a 'universal monarchy.'[221]

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[216] Valdeón has shown how Philips' work 'repositions' de las Casas' text as a justification for English military intervention not only in America but also in Ireland. Both Davenant's operas contrast English benevolence with Spanish atrocity, even though he is forced to admit, in *The Cruelty of the Spaniards*, that his narrative of the English arrival is set in the future (Valdeón 2012: 7; Wiseman 1998: 146.)
[217] Orr 2001: 4.
[218] For Columbus contrasted favourably with his successors, see e.g. Lupher 2006: 53.
[219] Ovid, *Fasti* 3.875-876. For the association of the Golden Fleece with trade and exploration, and with Drake, in Early Modern discourse, see Trevisan 2016: 249-251, 255-257.
[220] Montrose 1993: 190-200.
[221] Orr 2001: 8-9.

Returning to Apollo's prophecy in the light of the English dominion foretold in book 6, and bearing in mind O'Hara's identification of Virgil's use of misleading prophecies which function to console or reassure the immediate audience, a rather different reading emerges.[222] Europe, Apollo explains, will fall, overwhelmed by wars both internal and external (*externis propriisque*, 1187), and then

> Ingenium, Pietas, Artes, ac bellica virtus,
> Hùc profugae venient, & regna illustria condent.
>
> Invention, Piety, Arts and martial virtue shall come here as exiles and will found renowned dominions.
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1190-1191.

The overtones of the *Aeneid* here are unmistakable. *Profugae* recalls the *fato profugus* of *Aeneid* 1.2; *regna illustria condent* is an effective summary of Aeneas' mission.[223] Moreover, Cowley explicitly states that this empire will be another Rome:

> Qualia *Romano* quondam sed vidimus *Orbe*
>
> But like the one we saw once, in the Roman world
>
> *Plantarum* 5.1199.

Like Virgil's Italy, America will be settled by exiles, albeit the abstract qualities of *Ingenium, Pietas, Artes* and *bellica virtus*; and, like Aeneas' union of Italy and Troy, the identity of the *regna illustria* which they will found will be at the very least a blend of Old and New Worlds.[224] Hofmann reads this passage as a prediction of the transatlantic emigration that was to gather increasing momentum over the next centuries and of the emergence of American nations as major international powers.[225] More generally, the passage expresses the notion of the *translatio imperii*, the cyclical view of power by which the growth of one empire is inevitably followed by decline and the rise of another.[226] Given the prophecies in book 6 of a British maritime empire (the Dodona oak, 6.600-606; the Dryad, 6.1122-1125), Cowley generates some ambiguity as to the form his envisaged *translatio imperii* will take, and at least raises the possibility here of a veiled and somewhat disingenuous allusion to the British imperialist vision.

6.2 *Hostis atrox ex hospite factus*: Britain, America and Troy[227]

This suspicion that the new empire foretold in Apollo's speech is actually a British empire is strengthened when we consider further the implications of Cowley's allusions to the Trojan War. We have already seen how these allusions colour the depiction of both the

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[222] O'Hara 1990: 3-4.
[223] See e.g. *Aeneid* 1.37, 1.208, 6.792, 8.48.
[224] The extent to which Trojan identity is subsumed into Italian, or indeed vice versa remains a live issue: see e.g. O'Hara 1990: 83-84, 140-151.
[225] Hofmann 1994: 631-632. See also McColley 2007: 53-54.
[226] Orr 2001: 136.
[227] *Plantarum* 5.1130.

Amerindians and the British (above, pp. 177 and 214). In this final section, I show how Cowley deploys his shifting Virgilian reference to Greeks, Trojans and Italians to shape a narrative in which the ultimate victors are the British.

As we have seen (above, p. 173), the Amerindians were commonly identified with Virgil's Latins. Accordingly, in the *Plantarum* the indigenous peoples belong to a far west which is described as *Hesperius* (1085); they lead lives of primitive self-sufficiency; like the Latins in *Aeneid* 7, the New World deities are the aggressors in a conflict which begins with a perceived insult. They are also compared to the Trojans in the simile of a sacked city; and the fabled wealth of Priam is echoed by the reference to riches of Montezuma and Huayna Capac.

However, they are also compared to the Greeks. In a detail recalling the Trojan Paris' archetypal abuse of hospitality in his abduction of Helen, the Spanish conquerors are *hostis atrox ex hospite factus* ('a bitter enemy made from a guest', 5.1130); a few lines later, the reference is strengthened when the plundered American gold is an *infoelicem Helenam* ('unlucky Helen', 1158) – something which will bring destruction to those who steal it. These allusions all reinforce a picture of the Amerindians as victims – 'losers' in Quint's terms: the Latins whose way of life is about to be rudely shattered by the arrival of Aeneas' *advena classis*; the Trojans whose city is destroyed; and the Greeks whose hospitality is abused and whose prize possession is plundered.[228]

Apollo is evasive as to the means by which the new empire will arise, carefully avoiding human agency in his account of a kingdom formed by the abstract qualities of *Ingenium*, *Pietas*, *Artes* and *bellica virtus* (1190-1191). Once more wealth, *opes*, will cause untold harm (1192-1193), until a new empire is established by the Fates (*Parcae*, 1194). As in Jupiter's prophecies to Venus and Juno in the *Aeneid*, Apollo is carefully selective in the information he gives to his Amerindian audience. Significantly, he is vague as to whether *Ingenium*, *Artes* and the rest represent skills acquired by the indigenous peoples, or ones brought over by immigrants; and by attributing agency to the Fates he glosses over the identity and ethnicity of the rulers of the new empire.[229] Moreover, unlike the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas is regularly issued with commands or where his future actions are foretold (as in Jupiter's prophecy in book 1), America maintains a passive stance throughout Apollo's speech. She passively welcomes the refugees from Europe, is harmed by wealth, and is the location – *hic statuent* – of an empire.

It is the British who are associated with action and agency. To be sure, they are first characterised in book 6 living a primitive life analogous to the reign of Saturn (6.55), one which will be violently terminated by the Civil War (6.57-65). But they are descended from the

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[228] Quint 1993: 51-53.
[229] O'Hara 1990: 132-150.

robust stock of Brutus, the descendant of Aeneas who belongs to the post-Iliadic age Trojan resurgence, and whose *Romanitas* is emphasised by the name which he shares with two prominent figures of Roman history. When the Dodona oak tree promises Brutus 'another world' (*mundum alium*, 600-1) as the base for his descendants' maritime empire, the phrase evokes the New World of the Americas as well as the island of Britain which is his immediate goal. And, like the empire prophesied by Apollo, the dominion of Brutus' descendants is defined in terms of the Roman empire (above, p. 201).

In the Dryad's prophecy, Charles II establishes an empire which will last *annos tercentum aut mille* ('for three hundred or a thousand years', 6.1115, i.e. until the year 2000 or 3000 AD.) With *tercentum*, Cowley echoes the *tertia [...] triginta [...] ter centum* of Jupiter's prophecy in *Aeneid* 1.265-270, reinforcing the link between Rome and the empire of Brutus and his descendants. This empire is further keyed to Apollo's prophecy of the rise of the New World when the Dryad foretells the return to Britain of *Pietas*, *Ingenium*, and *Artes* (6.1073-1076) – precisely those qualities which Apollo signalled as marking the beginning of American ascendancy. In the Dryad's speech, the studied vagueness of Apollo gives way to an assertive prophecy of a British maritime empire which will make Charles *dominus mundi et Neptunus [...] udi* (6.1124). As allusion to the *Aeneid* increasingly focuses on the prophecy of empire, the sympathetic portrayal of the exploited Amerindians in book 5 fades away, leaving a nationalistic celebration of British global supremacy.[230]

Cowley's portrayal of the New World has much in common with contemporary Restoration discourse of British imperialism, establishing Britain in opposition to Spain in order to occlude the shared colonial purpose. At the same time, he deploys Virgilian allusion to depict both British and Amerindians as the defeated Trojans or Latins; but while the Amerindians remain defeated, the British are able to enjoy the full potential of the Virgilian narrative to anticipate a future which, like that of Aeneas, will consist of *imperium sine fine*.

[230] Compare Craig Kallendorf's reading of Ercilla's *Araucana*, where, he argues, 'further voices' are deployed to evoke a sympathy for the Chileans which is ultimately overridden by the association of the Spaniards with the traditional epic virtues of self-control and piety (Kallendorf 2007: 77-101).

Conclusion

Hùc ades, ô *dilecte Deo!* Sacrum tibi lucum
Pangimus, aeterni pubentem Veris honore.
Tu mihi, Tu praesens frondosi Carminis ipse
Numen adesto, tuámque volens hic incole *Quercum*
Quam tibi longaevam statuo; non illa latebras
Perfugiúmque dabit; Sed victor fronde sedebis
Servatam ob patriam redimitus tempora querna,
Fulgebísque altus, totíque videberis Orbi.

Plantarum 6.18.25[231]

Cowley opened the final book of the *Plantarum* with this bold claim for the importance of his work. With the metaphor of the grove in which Charles will sit resplendent, he both locates the poem in the classical tradition and makes a thoroughly contemporary allusion to the story of the Boscobel oak. Moreover, he is ambitious in his aspirations for the work's reach: his tree is to be a long-lived one (*longaevam*) which will make his king visible to the entire world. This study set out to validate this claim and to establish the *Plantarum Libri Sex* as a significant Early Modern English literary work. Looking both to the cultural legacy of the classical world and to the events of mid-seventeenth century England, the *Plantarum* deploys the language, themes and tropes of ancient literature, modulating them through Early Modern analogic models of the body politic and the natural world, to understand and articulate the Civil War and Restoration from a Royalist perspective.

With its subject matter ranging from the inner workings of the female body to the Battle of Lowestoft in 1665, and its sophisticated interplay between ancient and modern, the work deserves consideration in a variety of scholarly contexts. In emphasising the political content of the *Plantarum*, I have shown how, by its use of allegory, analogy and metaphor, the work provides further evidence of the ways in which Royalist writers communicated political loyalties during the Interregnum and beyond.[232] The evident political engagement of the *Plantarum* further provides a helpful corrective to accounts of Cowley's years of retirement which take at face value the persona of the *Essays* and its apparent endorsement by Thomas Sprat.[233] By drawing attention to the multiple significations with which Cowley often endows his medical and botanical detail, my work contributes to ongoing debate about the development of English scientific discourse; and I suggest moreover that both the *Plantarum* and Evelyn's *Sylva* should be read as promoting the cultural and spiritual value of trees as much as their economic and military importance.[234] As a work which meditates on questions of politics and society via the properties and uses of plants, the *Plantarum* deserves to be

[231] Translation: above, p. 199.
[232] Patterson 1984; Potter 1989; Loxley 1997; Wilcher 2001.
[233] Sprat *De Vita*, sig. a3^{r-v}; Sprat, *Life*, sig. b2^{r}; Nethercot 1931: 232-43; Helgerson 1983: 224.
[234] Preston 2015: 9-17; Sawday 1995: 234-238; Arponen 2012; K. Thomas 1991: 198-199; Schama 1995: 159-162; Theis 2009: 223-239.

included in the growing body of scholarship concerned with Early Modern literary engagement with the natural world.[235]

1 The *Plantarum* and Cowley

The *Plantarum* has traditionally proved obstinately resistant to generic classification. Claire Preston reads it as a work of instruction; Alexander Lindsay describes it as Cowley's 'Latin didactic poem'; Victoria Moul argues for the primacy of its didactic purpose.[236] Robert Hinman, on the other hand, sees it as a celebration of universal order; for Leicester Bradner it is 'a mythological poem'; Raymond Anselment reads a meditation on 'the world of heroic struggle and triumphant patience.'[237] Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the work's fundamental premise is that close observation of the natural world can be used to illuminate questions of social and political organisation; in other words, that its botanical and arboreal content is intrinsically bound up with its political agenda. With the establishment of this analogic relationship, the wide-ranging thematic and generic nature of the work becomes more intelligible, in a way which will facilitate its inclusion in future scholarship on both scientific and political poetry of the period.

Underlying the *Plantarum* is a consistently Royalist agenda. In identifying this agenda in the allegedly Interregnum books 1-2, I have shown how Cowley asserted his continuing loyalty to the Stuart cause; and, in demonstrating the oblique and evasive ways in which this loyalty is often expressed, I lend further weight to those who, like Stella Revard and Thomas Corns, have argued for the coded Royalism of *Poems*.[238] While the real reasons for Cowley's lack of preferment after the Restoration remain obscure, the Royalist ideology of *Plantarum* 1-2 shows the poet's continued assertions of loyalty to the king's cause.[239]

As a counter-part to the *Essays*, Cowley's major English work of the 1660s, the *Plantarum* provides a useful corrective to the widely-held view that the poet embraced retirement and obscurity following his disappointment over the Mastership of the Savoy.[240] With the nuanced and multi-vocal discussion of the human body in the first two books, of kingship in books 3 and 4 and with both the historical narratives and the reflections on commerce and imperialism in the final two books, Cowley shows himself to be engaging deeply in contemporary political questions, refracting them through observation of the natural

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[235] Recent examples include Theis 2009 and Tigner 2012, neither of which mentions the *Plantarum*; and McColley 2007, which alludes to the 1689 translation at 53-54 and 136. Cowley does not appear at all in the recent *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide* (Munroe, Bruckner and Geisweidt 2015).
[236] 'Harness[ing] [...] dazzling learning and literary ability to actual manual labour' (Preston 2015: 205); Lindsay 2004; 'a combination of Latin poetic forms and scientific seriousness' (Moul 2017: 180).
[237] 'An impressive, comprehensive view of the universe and man's place in it' (Hinman 1960: 270); Bradner 1940: 114; Anselment 1988: 181.
[238] Corns 1992: 256-265; Revard 1993.
[239] Nethercot 1931: 148-155. See also Lindsay 2004.
[240] Above, p.51.

world in a manner akin to the riddling allegories of 'Upon Appleton House.'[241] Modern scholarship on the literature of retirement, of Royalist resistance and retreat, and of the Stoic garden discusses Cowley almost exclusively in terms of the solitude and obscurity embraced, however reluctantly, in the *Essays*, reading the *Plantarum* as the scholarly product of this solitude.[242] My emphasis on Cowley's ongoing engagement with the Civil War and Restoration in the *Plantarum* exposes the partiality of this reading and shows that the persona of the *Essays* represents only one facet of Cowley's Restoration literary activity.

2 The *Plantarum* and Neo-Latin

In demonstrating the work's considerable literary interest, I argue for its inclusion in the canon of Cowley's work, where it can be seen to develop and illuminate themes and ideas first seen in, most obviously, *The Civil War*, the *Pindarique Odes* and the *Davideis*. The length of the *Plantarum,* the contemporary standing of its author, and its undoubted literary merit, demand that it be taken seriously as a Latin poem. While the focus of this thesis has been on the engagement with classical Latin literature, it is undoubtedly the case that understanding of the *Plantarum* would be enhanced by study of its intertextual engagement with neo-Latin literature, both British and European.

While it has been my contention that the *Plantarum* does not sit easily within the genre of neo-Latin didactic, further research could help to clarify its generic siting, both within the tradition of Italian Renaissance factual poetry and within seventeenth-century botanical and medical didactic.[243] Understanding of the work's relation to the latter would be greatly facilitated by a better knowledge of the intellectual activity of exiled English writers in the 1640s and 1650s, who included not only Cowley, but also Davenant, Waller and Hobbes.[244]

Victoria Moul has commented on the need for consideration of intertextual relationships between neo-Latin poems.[245] In focusing on the *Plantarum* and the classical canon, this thesis has addressed only tangentially the engagement of the work with the body of neo-Latin literature. The Horatian odes of books 3 and 4, with their self-contained stanzas and mannered style, certainly draw on the neo-Latin lyric tradition, and deserve closer study in this context.[246]

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[241] See especially Colie 1970: 181-204; Corns 1992: 235-240; Theis 2009: 193-212; Shifflett 1998: 44-52.
[242] Scott-Baumann 2013: 109-110; Helgerson 1983: 224; Davis 2008: 93-126.
[243] Monreal 2010 considers the *Plantarum* alongside Rapin's *Hortorum*; it would also merit comparison with Quillet's *Callipaedia* (Quillet 1656).
[244] The recent work of Smith and Major, and Major's edited volume, focus on the experience of exile and does not address the question of intellectual engagement beyond the exile community (Smith 2003; Major 2010 and 2013). Britland's account of the theatrical activities of Henrietta Maria's court in exile suggests that further research in this area would prove fruitful (Britland 2006: 192-295).
[245] Moul 2017: 3-4.
[246] Moul 2012: 90. On neo-Latin lyric, see Moul 2015b; Gaisser 2017; Revard 2014.

By showing the importance of the *Plantarum* to the understanding of Cowley's works and its nuanced engagement with the contemporary world, this thesis lends further urgency to calls for a better knowledge and understanding of the still-understudied field of seventeenth-century English neo-Latin poetry (Introduction, p. 24). The anthologies of occasional pieces produced by the universities throughout this period remain unedited and untranslated, with existing scholarship focused almost exclusively on their English contents.[247] The undoubted interest and quality of the *Plantarum*, itself the work of a Cambridge fellow and anthology contributor, suggests that these volumes deserve investigation, not least in terms of their handling of the conventions of panegyric in the face of successive regime changes.

3 The *Plantarum* and Classical Reception

Throughout the *Plantarum*, Cowley demonstrates his sophisticated reading of the classical canon, adroitly redeploying the language, subject matter and imagery of ancient writers to provide a commentary on the events of mid-seventeenth-century Britain. Recent work on classical reception in Early Modern English and European literature has shown the many and varied ways in which ancient literature was adopted and adapted to serve the needs of the present: this work, however, does not typically include discussion of literature in Latin.[248] In the case of Cowley, much of whose English poetry is strongly classically-inflected, and who wrote in Latin throughout his career, it seems particularly dangerous to overlook the Latin poetry in discussion of his engagement with the classics.[249] However, by demonstrating Cowley's careful reading of ancient authors, this thesis argues strongly that literature in Latin deserves far greater consideration in the study of Early Modern receptions of the classical world.

4 The *Plantarum* and Science

Cowley, so often described as a leading member of the Royal Society and of its Georgical Committee, was in fact peripheral to this intellectual circle. While his early enthusiasm is shown by his involvement in the Society's foundation and by the publication of the *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy*, his participation thereafter appears to have been negligible.[250] His ode 'To the Royal Society' was written as a favour to

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[247] Norbrook 1999: 222-3; Money 2015: 80-85. James Loxley has discussed the English poetry which appears in some of these volumes (Loxley 1997: 58-95).
[248] Cheney and Hardie 2015; Kallendorf 2007; Quint 1993; Pugh 2010; Paleit 2013. Norbrook 1999 does cover some literature in Latin (Norbrook 1999: 209-212, 231-238); Hardie 2012 considers both Latin and English versions of Cowley's *Davideis*; Kilgour 2012 includes discussion of Milton's Latin poetry in her study of the poet's Ovidianism. See also the discussion of Payne Fisher's Latin works in Knoppers 2000: 58-64; 89-93.
[249] Davis 2008, in discussing the translations from classical authors in the *Essays*, does not consider the *Plantarum*, or the translation of the opening of book 4 found in 'Of Agriculture'.
[250] Cowley 1661.

his friend Thomas Sprat and even then only after an adroitly cajoling letter from Evelyn.[251] Consequently, assumptions of Cowley's identification with the 'new science' should be treated with caution.[252]

Scholars who have viewed the *Essays* as the primary product of Cowley's last years have tended to take at face value the promotion of georgic values, notably in 'Of Agriculture', and, to the extent that they consider the *Plantarum,* have seen it as further evidence of the poet's espousal of a rural retirement dedicated to scientific investigation.[253] Most recently, Claire Preston has insisted on the scientific intent of the *Plantarum*, arguing that Cowley deploys his considerable literary powers and classical learning in order to enhance the status of unglamorous georgic activity.[254] This approach is problematised by appreciation of Cowley's marginal status in the Royal Society. Moreover, it fails to take into account the sheer quantity of material in the *Plantarum* that is not scientific at all – as in the case of the Civil War and Restoration narrative of book 6, or Apollo's prophecy in book 5 – or, as in many of the odes in books 3 and 4, where scientific information is muted; or, as in the menstruation debate, where the scientific content is radically divergent from contemporary teaching (above, p. 47).

This thesis has argued that the medical and botanical content of the *Plantarum* is presented both as a subject of interest in its own right, and as a means of illuminating the larger questions of politics and society which Cowley wants to present to the reader. This results in a combination of scientific exposition with traditional analogic reasoning which, though by no means uncommon in seventeenth-century prose writing, is startlingly at odds with the sharp modern separation of science from literature, and to a great extent explains the difficulty so many modern readers have had in making sense of the poem.[255]

Given the increasing frequency with which Evelyn cites the *Plantarum* through the successive editions of *Sylva*, and the presence of the work in *Elysium Britannicum*, there is a case for re-evaluating Evelyn's agenda, particularly in *Sylva*. Arponen's work has problematised the circumstances of the work's composition; it is important now to ask whether the work's apparent economic concerns rather mask a deeper preoccupation with the spiritual and cultural value of trees and the role of the forests in the emotional wellbeing of the nation. This in turn raises a larger question, namely the extent to which the 'georgic revolution' of the long eighteenth century was a product of an atavistic return to the land as opposed to an enthusiasm for scientific agriculture.[256]

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[251] See above, p. 192.
[252] See for example Sawday's close identification of Cowley's poetry with the values of the'new science' (Sawday 1995: 237-245).
[253] Low 1985: 126-132; Parry 1992:144-146; Preston 2015: 207.
[254] Preston 2015: 205.
[255] Above, p. 223.
[256] Low 1985: 127-131.

5 The *Plantarum* and English literature

As a work still inaccessible to much of the Anglophone scholarly community, the *Plantarum* has received very little study in an English literary context. In the continued absence of a modern edition or translation of the text, this study lends urgency to calls for the poem to be made available for consideration in the mainstream of seventeenth-century English literary studies. In using the natural world as a stimulus for socio-political reflection, the *Plantarum* forms part of a strand which includes the country-house poem, Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and *Paradise Lost*.[257] Recent work on the latter, in particular, which has focused on Milton's engagement with Ovid and with Virgilian and Lucanian epic, strongly suggests that comparison with Cowley's handling of these intertexts would prove fruitful, not least given the different ideological stance of the two poets.[258]

I have argued that Cowley's account of the New World in book 5 is underpinned by an identification between Amerindians and primitive Britons which runs in counterpoint to a narrative which suggests that America will in turn be assimilated to a new British empire.[259] This identification could usefully be developed in the context of the study of colonialism in Interregnum and Restoration literature, with reference to Davenant's 'operas', to *Paradise Lost* and to Dryden's rhymed heroic plays.[260]

Cowley's nuanced exploration of kingship in books 3 and 4 and his sensitive interweaving of his Lucanian and Virgilian intertexts in the narrative of book 6 reveal the complex strategies at work within Restoration panegyric. The tensions and ambiguities beneath the panegyric surface of the work lend further support to scholars who have identified a representational crisis in early Restoration literature.[261] Given the classicising nature of other contemporary panegyrics, including Restoration odes by Cowley and Waller and Dryden's heavily classicising *Astraea Redux* (as well as the more conflicted *Annus Mirabilis*), close reading of the deployment of classical allusion of these texts may well reveal a comparable complexity.[262]

Above all, I hope to have made the case for the *Plantarum* as a rich and fascinating literary work whose undeserved modern scholarly neglect can be attributed to its Latinity and its generic elusiveness: the very qualities which give the work much of its complexity and depth. It fully merits a place in the mainstream of Early Modern literary studies.

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[257] R. Williams 1972: 13-34. Cooper's Hill: O'Hehir 1969.
[258] M. Green 2009; Kilgour 2012; Kallendorf 2007: 138-168.
[259] Above, pp. 221-222.
[260] Davenant: *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*; *Sir Francis Drake*; Dryden*, The Indian Queen; The Indian Emperour*. See Orr 2001: 135-187; Evans 1996; Tigner 2012: 227-230.
[261] Sawday 1992: 171-173; MacLean 1990: 259; Maguire 1992: 6-10.
[262] Cowley 1660a; Dryden 1660; Waller 1660.

Appendix: Summaries of Individual Books

The individual plants are cited by their most common English names, followed by the Latin name used by Cowley. Note that in many cases this differs from the modern botanical Latin nomenclature. See also Monreal 2010:278-313.

Table 1: *Plantarum* 1

Lines	*Voice*	*Content*
1-56	The poet	Theme of plants; introduction of Betony.
57-160	Betony (*Vettonica*)	Betony's many uses, notably the treatment of ailments of the head, including epilepsy (57-104). Bronchial infections (105-114); quartan fever, digestive disorders (115-122); uses in menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth (123-134); treatment of gout, snakebite, painful limbs, fatigue, dull complexion (135-150). Comparison of Betony's achievements with those of her compatriot Trajan (151-160).
161-210	Maidenhair Fern (*Capillus Veneris*)	Maidenhair Fern's powers as a hair tonic; the importance of attractively luxuriant hair (171-184). The plant's ability to repel water (185-200) and its treatment of excessive moisture in the body (201-6). Comparison with the Lock of Berenice (207-210).
211-270	The poet	Sage (*Salvia*): assists memory and strengthens the nerves (211-254); stabilises teeth (255-8); prevents miscarriage (259-64).
271-302	The poet	Lemon Balm (*Melissa*). Anti-melancholic.
303-370	Scurvy-Grass (*Cochlearia*)	Scurvy and its treatment.
371-414	The poet	Dodder (*Cassytha*). The parasitic plant, whose identity is entirely subsumed in that of its host, is held up as an example of marital fidelity (371-404). Treatment of the liver and spleen (405-414).
415-516	Wormwood (*Absinthium*)	Bitter Wormwood treats digestive disorders, especially constipation (415-448). A Stoic plant (449-466). Effective against bile (467-474), excessive moisture (475-486), worms and fleas (487-496), pestilential air (499-510). Consumed by triumphant Roman generals (511-516).
517-606	Water-Lily (*Nymphaea*)	The story of Water-Lily's affair with Hercules and subsequent metamorphosis (517-576). Her powers as an antaphrodisiac (577-590), cooling agent (591-602) and soporific (603-606).

607-658	Spleenwort (*Asplenum*)	Spleenwort's unlovely appearance (607-616) contrasted with the ability to treat the spleen (638-658).
659-674	The poet	Lettuce (*Lactuca*): should be forgiven for healing Augustus, murderer of Cicero and author of Ovid's exile, since they were unknown to her (659-664). The plant's cooling properties (667-674).
675-690	Lettuce (*Lactuca*) 2	The delights of salad and a vegetarian diet.
691-770	The poet	Eyebright (*Euphrasia*) appears before the poet in answer to his prayer for healing (691-705) and, after describing her power to heal the eyes (723-758), instructs him to drink a tincture of her leaves (759-768).
771-830	Winter-Cherries (*Vesicaria*)	Boasts of her ability to bear fruit in winter (771-808). Efficacy against gallstones (809-830).
831-844	The poet	Sundew 1(*Rorella*). The plant's beauty and the inexhaustible liquid contained in its cup-shaped leaves.
845-872	The poet	Sundew 2: the ever-renewing moisture of the leaves (845-860); benefits to heart, limbs, lungs (861-8); aphrodisiac powers (869-72).
873-876	The poet	Cyclamen 1: cyclamen closes the vein of the nose and opens that of the rectum.
877-886	The poet	Cyclamen 2: the cabbage's natural antipathy to cyclamen is a symbol of the plant's medicinal powers.
887-894	Cyclamen	Cyclamen 3: the plant angrily repudiates its common name of 'sowbread'.
895-908	Cyclamen	Cyclamen 4: powers against sores, tumours and pockmarks (895-906); assistance in childbirth (906-7).
909-928	Cyclamen	Cyclamen 5: efficacious against jaundice, haemorrhoids, bile, styes, gout (909-18); splinters and thorns (919-20); poison (921-2). Abortifacient (923-8).
929-954	Ducks' Meat (*Lens Palustris*)	Feeds frogs which in turn fatten ducks (929-944). Cooling and moisturising powers (945-954).
955-1028	The poet	Rosemary (*Rosmarinus*): *de morsu tarantulae*. The symptoms (955-982) and treatment (985-1028) of Tarantism.
1029-1128	Mint (*Mentha*)	Contrary to popular belief, it is safe to plant and eat mint in wartime, nor is the herb emasculating (1029-1052). In fact, mint heat nourishes the semen and stimulates the appetite (1053-58); it also soothes ulcers, staunches blood, and is effective against the bites of snakes and rabid dogs (1067-1074). The story of Mint's rape by Hades and subsequent metamorphosis (1075-1128).
1129-1176	Mistletoe (*Viscus Quernus*)	The plant's role in Druidic religion (1129-1152). Powers against snakebite and magic spells (1155-7); epilepsy (1158-64); female infertility (1165-70). The first humans, who according to legend were born from the oak tree, were a kind of mistletoe (1171-76).
1177-1200	Celandine (*Chelidonia*)	The herb's powers against jaundice.
1201-1236	The poet	Celandine 2. Swallows showed humans how to use celandine to treat the eyes (1201-1214). It is also effective against stomach disorders, toothache, jaundice, ulcers, wounds, cancer and skin lesions (1215-1236).

1237-1272	Rocket (*Eruca*)	Rocket boasts of her aphrodisiac powers.
1273-1312	The poet	Rocket 2: the poet sternly dismisses her. The only place for rocket in his book is among the poisons (1295-6).

Table 2: *Plantarum* 2

Lines	*Voice*	*Content*
1-20	The poet	Introduction of theme: matters to be known only to women. Invocation to the Moon and to goddesses of marriage and childbirth.
21-50	The poet	It is spring: the plants begin to grow, and assemble by tribe. Laurel, assigned to the plants concerned with women's ailments, has reported the meeting to the poet.
51-132	The poet (informed by Laurel)	The plants assemble by moonlight in the Botanic Garden in Oxford. Catalogue of gynaecological plants.
133-170	Mugwort (*Artemisia*)	As President, calls the meeting to order and announces discussion of menstruation.
171-202 (*oratio obliqua*)	Pennyroyal (*Pulegium*)	The physiological harm caused by retained menstrual blood.
203-210	The poet (informed by Laurel)	The plants react tearfully to Pennyroyal's words.
211-242 (*oratio recta*)	Pennyroyal (*Pulegium*)	Pennyroyal resumes her speech.
243-254	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Applause for Pennyroyal's speech; introduction of Dittany.
255-304	Dittany (*Dictamnus*)	Evil powers of menstruating women and menstrual blood.
305-316	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Dittany drowned out by chorus of dissent; introduction of Plantain.
317-358	Plantain (*Plantago*)	Dismisses Dittany's words as poetic fabrication: this Cretan plant has read too much Greek poetry.
359-364	Bramble (*Rubus*)	Jokes that as snakes do not poison themselves, so is a woman's menstrual blood not toxic to herself (but may be to others).
365-372	The poet (informed by Laurel)	General hilarity; discomfit of Plantain; introduction of Rose.
373-474	Rose (*Rosa*)	Women are far too beautiful for their blood to be harmful (373-384); in fact, menstrual blood exists to nurture the growing foetus, and is expelled only to prevent an excess accumulating if

		conception does not occur (385-422). After the child is born, the body converts the blood to breast milk (423-446). As menstrual blood leaves the body, it picks up harmful *semina* which result in it becoming toxic, though its ill-effects are greatly exaggerated (447-474).
475-478	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Widespread confusion and dissent; Laurel summoned to give an authoritative view.
479-604	Laurel (*Laurus*)	Dittany and Rose are both too extreme; the truth lies in the middle (479-496). Humans are the only species to menstruate, though all species reproduce (499-508); the foetus is nurtured not by menstrual blood but by the milk of the uterus (509-544); nature would not choose to make humans cannibals by feeding them blood (545-552). Differences in appearance between the sexes are less marked in other species (553-578); but men are attracted by female beauty, so that sex is not merely a physical act (579-588). So menstruation flushes away the blood which would causes women to becomes more masculine in appearance, as happened to Iphis and Phaethousa (589-604).
605-12	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Thus, among many other things, did the Laurel, beloved of the truth-telling god, instruct them. Introduction of Birthwort.
613-726	Birthwort (*Aristolochia)*	Powers of Birthwort to aid childbirth.
727-788	Mastick-tree (*Lentiscus*)	Criticism of abortion, aimed particularly at Savin.
789-94	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Plants divided; introduction of Savin.
795-914	Savin (*Sabina*)	It is not the plant that is guilty of causing abortion, but rather the woman who uses it. Very many plants are abortifacients.
915-918	The poet (informed by Laurel)	General applause; Mugwort rises to speak.
919-988	Mugwort (*Artemisia*)	Herbs can help or harm depending on when and how they are used. The fragility of the growing foetus. Myrrh invited to speak.
989-1020 (*oratio obliqua*) 1021-1181 (*oratio recta*)	Myrrh (*Myrrha*)	Hysteria and its treatment; the nature of conception.
1181-1204	The poet (informed by Laurel)	Entrance of the gardener in search of cyclamen. The meeting is dissolved.

Table 3: *Plantarum* 3

Lines	*Voice*	*Metre*	*Content*
1-56	The poet	Elegiacs	It is spring, the first day of May (11-12), the day on which Chloris married Zephyrus (13-32) and the day of the Flora's festival, which the goddess has continued to celebrate in different parts of the world (33-56).
57-116	The poet	Elegiacs	This is the day of the glorious Restoration (57-71), and Flora has called a gathering of flowers on the banks of the Thames (72-80). Flowers arrive from all over the world, in the form of their Platonic ideas (81-116).
117-172	The poet	Elegiacs	A contest is held to appoint a queen of the flowers (117-126). The scene is described: a temple-like arbour with a central throne on which the goddess is seated (127-150), with her attendants standing in front: the hours, months and seasons (151-172).
173-224	The poet	Elegiacs	Flora summons the flowers of winter (173-82). The mezereon, viburnum, aconite, spring snowflake, hepatica, blue primrose, anemone, cyclamen and crocus all appear (183-218), but only the hellebore enters the contest (219-224).
225-340	Hellebore (*Helleborus Niger*)	Elegiacs	Hellebore does not claim the title for her beauty, which is in any case a frivolous and ephemeral quality (225-248). Hellebore, the flower that can survive winter, deserves the crown (249-312). The plant is effective against cancer, leprosy, fever, dropsy, vertigo, epilepsy, apoplexy, andinsanity (321-338); its empire extends over the whole world, and is greater than that of Caesar (339-40).
341-482	The poet	Elegiacs	Applause for Hellebore (341-2). The spring flowers enter (343-54) and the trumpet-like daffodil *Pseudonarcissus* orders non-competitors to leave (355-361). These include the orchid, dog's tooth violet, muscari, ornithogalum, daisy, *sanicula guttata*, navel-wort, honesty, geranium, gladiolus, aquilegia, fritillary, Persian lily, lily of the valley, periwinkle, buttercup, martagon lily, Adonis-flower, stocks, wallflower, marigold, helleborine, goat's beard, ox-eye, vipers grass, fumitory, honesty, moth-mullein, cuckoo-flower, pulmonaria (362-460); and the shrubs honeysuckls, broom, lilac, elder and flowering cherry and peach (461-476). Finally, only the competitors remain, and the violet steps forward (477-82).

483-538	Violet (*Viola*)	Sapphics	Violet, the first flower of spring, is loved by Venus (499-506), is beautiful and fragrant (507-514) and can soothe fever (515-530). Her claim to the title lies in her combination of power and gentleness (531-538).
539-552	The poet	Elegiacs	Violet departs and is followed by the numerous and diverse auricula family, led by the yellow variety.
553-586	Auricula (*Auricula Ursi*)	First Asclepiad	Auricula's many flowers on a single stem make her a nosegay in herself (553-564). With her her ability to stabilise the head (565-574), she does not deserve her undignified name of 'bear's ear' (575-86).
587-598	The poet	Elegiacs	The narcissi enter, led by Narcissus Calchedonicus.
599-622	Narcissus	Fourth Asclepiad	Narcissus is as beautiful a flower as he was a boy.
623-632	The poet	Elegiacs	The anemones enter, led by the purple variety.
633-672	Anemone	Third Asclepiad	The Anemone, born from the blood of Adonis and the tears of Venus, deserves the crown on account of her beauty.
673-680	The poet	Elegiacs	The majestic entrance of the Crown Imperial.
681-724	Crown Imperial (*Corona Imperialis*)	Alcaics	The crown-like flowers of the plant make it obvious that Nature has chosen her to be queen.
725-752	The poet	Elegiacs	The Crown Imperial's claim is undermined by her unpleasant smell. Entrance of the tulips, led by the white variety.
753-804	Tulip (*Tulipa*)	Second Asclepiad	The rich variety of the tulip's clothing earns her the title of queen (753-784). She is also an aphrodisiac (785-804).
805-808	The poet	Elegiacs	Flora blushes. Entrance of Iris.
809-879	Iris	Hendecasyllables	Iris' serene beauty earns her the crown (809-821), a beauty which is matched by her fragrance which, uniquely, comes not from her flower but from her root (824-842). She drives out bile and cures dropsy (843-861); she is also associated with the divine pledge represented by her namesake the rainbow (862-873), and stands as a guarantee against future bodily indundation (874-879).
880-897	The poet	Elegiacs	The peonies, male and female, arrive.
898-943	Peony (*Paeonia*)	Iambic trimeter plus iambic dimeter	Peony claims the title not on the grounds of beauty (898-909) but because of the healing powers which cure epilepsy and were used by Apollo to cure Pluto (912-931), powers which work, mysteriously, through scent alone (932-943).
944-963	The poet	Elegiacs	Departure of Peony; entrance of all the different roses.
964-1055	Rose (*Rosa*)	Sapphics	The rose as a benchmark for beauty (964-1019). Though short-lived, she is survived by her fragrance, which clings to her petals even when she is dead (1020-55).

1056-1081	The poet	Elegiacs	Acclaim for rose, who is surrounded by her supporters, the yellow rose, the white and the red (1056-1081).
1082-1115	The poet	Elegiacs	The Wars of the Roses (1082-1115)
1116-1123	The poet	Elegiacs	I have wandered too far astray: this is a theme for Lucan, Statius or Virgil.

Table 4: *Plantarum* 4

Lines	*Voice*	*Metre*	*Content*
1-48	The poet	Elegiacs	The happy man.
49-62	The poet	Elegiacs	I digress: my theme is flowers of summer and autumn.
63-70	The poet	Elegiacs	Heartsease (*Viola tricolor*).
71-76	The poet	Elegiacs	Sweet rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*).
77-86	The poet	Elegiacs	Chamomile (*Chamaemelon*).
87-98	The poet	Elegiacs	Cornflower (*Cyanus*).
99-112	The poet	Elegiacs	Nigella.
113-118	The poet	Elegiacs	Venus' Looking-Glass (*Legousia speculum-veneris*).
119-124	The poet	Elegiacs	Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum*).
125-130	The poet	Elegiacs	Monkshood (*Napellus*).
131-152	The poet	Elegiacs	Anthora (*Aconitum anthora*).
153-154	The poet	Elegiacs	Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*).
155-162	The poet	Elegiacs	Campion (*Lychnis*).
163-170	The poet	Elegiacs	Flower of Bristol (*Lychnis chalcedonica*).
171-176	The poet	Elegiacs	Loose-strife and Gentian (*Lysimachia, Gentianus*).
177-186	The poet	Elegiacs	Soapwort (*Saponaria*).
187-198	The poet	Elegiacs	Campanula.
199-200	The poet	Elegiacs	Blue bindweed (*Convolvulus*).
201-204	The poet	Elegiacs	Canterbury bells (*Trachelium*).
205-206	The poet	Elegiacs	Foxglove (*Digitalis*).
207-210	The poet	Elegiacs	Tomato (*Pomum amoris*).
211-212	The poet	Elegiacs	The Indian Flowery Reed (*Canna indica*).
213-228	The poet	Elegiacs	Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum maius*).
229-254	The poet	Elegiacs	Larkspur (*Consolida*).
255-264	The poet	Elegiacs	Bastard dittany (*Dictamnus albus*).

265-266	The poet	Elegiacs	Candy-tuft (*Thlaspi*).[1]
267-268	The poet	Elegiacs	Scabious (*Scabiosa*).
269-272	The poet	Elegiacs	Spanish pellitory (*Anacyclus pyrethrum*).
273-274	The poet	Elegiacs	Cyclamen (*Cyclaminus*).
275-282	The poet	Elegiacs	Mouse-ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*).
283-288	The poet	Elegiacs	Deptford pink (*Dianthus armeria).*
289-292	The poet	Elegiacs	Lobel's Catch-Fly (*Silena armeria*).
293-296	The poet	Elegiacs	Epimedium.
297-300	The poet	Elegiacs	Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*).
310-310	The poet	Elegiacs	Michaelmas daisy (*Aster amellus*).
311-331	The poet	Elegiacs	Spider-wort (*Tradescantia*).
332-336	The poet	Elegiacs	Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*).
337-340	The poet	Elegiacs	Yucca.
341-348	The poet	Elegiacs	Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*).
349-386	The poet	Elegiacs	African Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*).
387-392	The poet	Elegiacs	Rock-rose (*Cistus*).
393-400	The poet	Elegiacs	Gum Cistus (*Cistus ladanifer*).
401-408	The poet	Elegiacs	Jasmine (*Jasminum*).
409-430	The poet	Elegiacs	Orange tree (*Citrus mitis*).
431-438	The poet	Elegiacs	Bean (*Faba*).
439-442	The poet	Elegiacs	Lupin (*Lupinus*).
443-450	The poet	Elegiacs	Mandrake (*Mandragora*).
451-472	The poet	Elegiacs	Water-lily (*Nymphaea*).
473-502	The poet	Elegiacs	Passion-flower (*Passiflora*).
503-514	The poet	Elegiacs	Only the competitors remained, including the rustic Allium Moly.
515-529	Moly	Greater archilochean + iambic dimeter calaleptic	Moly claims to be the plant used by Ulysses against Circe.

[1] *Thlaspi*, a native English wild mustard, was long identified with the plant *Iberis amara* which today goes by the common name of Candytuft. See Loudon 1811: 69. It is not clear which of the two is meant.

530-547	The poet	Elegiacs and iambic strophe	Moly breaks off with a belch, to the general hilarity of the other plants, who mockingly quote Horace's lines on garlic from *Epode* 3.1-4, until Flora silences them with a nod.
548-583	Flora	Elegiacs	How Jupiter, concerned by the power of the Homeric moly, turned it to stone.
584-657	Flora	Elegiacs	Flora explains how she attempted to propagate the Phoenix plant, which had enabled Juno to conceive Mars without Jupiter's involvement (584-617). Unfortunately Jupiter sends a mole who uproots Flora's garden and destroys the plant (618-647). To avoid the anger of the gods, Moly should rest content and not aspire to regal status (648-57).
658-705	Madonna Lily (*Lilium Candidum*)	Alcaics.	The Madonna Lily is a swan among plants (658-665); her whiteness recalls the pure milk on which infants are fed (666-673) and the myth of her origin from the breast milk of Juno (674-685). It is the colour of peace, prosperity, hope, joy, faith, beauty and chastity (686-700); she is the only pure white flower (701-704).
706-719	The poet	Elegiacs	The Madonna Lily takes her seat, accompanied by other lilies of diverse colours, and the Opium Poppy, with difficulty, rouses itself to speak.
720-803	Opium Poppy (*Papaver*)	Sapphics	An ode to sleep. The importance of Poppy as an aid to sleep (732-767); Ceres values the poppy so highly that she lets it grow among the corn and carries it in her hand (768-792); the plant is especially prolific with its seed in response to the proliferation of human worry and toil (793-803).
804-829	The poet	Elegiacs	Poppy falls asleep, and the other plants are overcome by slumber, until the Sunflower resolutely stands up to speak.
830-855	Sunflower (*Flos Solis*)	Pythiambic: dactylic hexameter + iambic trimeter	Sunflower's appearance makes it clear that he is a true son of Apollo (830-847). Apollo in return has planted Sunflower in the New World, rich in gold, to be a living coinage (848-855).
856-859	The poet	Elegiacs	Sunflower sits down and is followed by Gillyflower.
860-887	Gillyflower (*Flos Iovis, Caryophyllus*)	Hexameter + dactylic tetrameter	Sunflower has no medicinal powers and only one colour (860-75); Gillyflower, son of Jupiter, has many different-coloured varieties and many pharmacological applications (876-887).
888-915	The poet	Elegiacs	Even the Rose is troubled by the strength of Gillyflower's case (890-1). The other carnations, pinks and gillyflowers follow (892-895), then the crocus family, led by the purple autumn crocus, who banishes the poisonous colchicum (896-915).
916-987	Crocus	Hendecasyllables	Crocus was a youth, turned into a flower after an unhappy love-affair, and now is able to bring true happiness (916-945). He also purges the heart of harmful humours and clears the body and the lungs (946-965); he provides relief in childbirth (968-987).
988-1001	The poet	Elegiacs	All the flowers are revived and reinvigorated by Crocus, including Poppy (988-997). Finally Amaranthus rises to speak (998-1001).
1002-1029	Amaranthus	Second Asclepiad	Amaranthus' imperishable flowery tufts make him different from all other flowers.

1030-1073	The poet (1030-1037; 1072-1073); Flora (1038-1071)	Elegiacs	The flowers have all spoken; Flora considers her verdict. As a Roman goddess she cannot endorse a monarchy (1048-59) and instead establishes a republic, with the Rose and Lily as consuls and Tulip, Gillyflower, Crocus and Hellebore as praetors (1060-71). All express their approval.

Table 5: *Plantarum* 5

Illustrations of many of the New World plants described by Cowley can be found on Professor Kinney's website (Kinney 2007: http://cowley.lib.virginia.edu/small/plants.htm)

Lines	*Voice*	*Content*
1-12	The poet.	The move to hexameter and the more elevated theme of trees.
13-49	The poet.	The Fortunate Isles, mid-way between Old and New Worlds, where Pomona has built a city of fruit trees.
50-111	The poet.	Pomona holds her autumnal festival, summoning the rustic deities of the Old World together with the gods of the New (50-76), who partake in a lavish banquet consisting of the produce of every kind of tree (77-101). The gods enthusiastically praise the fruits of the Old World, until the Amerindian god Omelochilus becomes indignant at the lack of recognition for the Americas (102-111).
112-142	Omelochilus.	It must be from envy that the European deities are failing to praise American fruit, since they are eagery consuming it (112-22). America's fertility is remarkable, and continues even in her present troubles (123-137). Let us hold a contest to see whether the Old World or the New is richer in fruit (137-142).
143-163	The poet.	The gods assent eagerly and Pomona summons the trees. First come the Old World trees, divided into nut trees and fruit trees. Of the former, the chestnut, the hazel and the pine are included, despite their fruit being mainly used as fodder (155-62).
164-208	The poet; Pomona (168-75); Bacchus (176-179); Minerva (180-199).	The hazel (*Corylus*). Pomona warns Silenus against cracking his teeth on the shell (168-75); Bacchus alludes to Virgil's instruction not to plant the vine among hazels (*Georgics* 2.299); Minerva asks Apollo to explain how a hazel rod can be used to detect buried gold, which he signally fails to do (180-208).
209-220	The poet.	The chestnut (*Castanea*). Is it a nut or an acorn? Description of the chestnut's spiny casing.
221-249	The poet.	The pine (*Pinus*). Praised by Virgil (222-223); sacred to Pan (225-227); important to Neptune as the raw material for ships (228-242). The metamorphosis of Attis (243-249; Catullus 64; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.104-5).
250-275	The poet.	The almond (*Amygdalus*). The metamorphosis of Ia and her sister (250-265; Arnobius *Adversus nations* 5.5); the metamorphosis of Phyllis (266-275; Ovid, *Heroides* 2).

276-319	The poet.	The pistachio (*Pistacia*, 276-7); the walnut (*Iuglans*), sacred to Jupiter (278-282). Its similarity to the brain (283-296); uses for carpentry and medicine (297-311), despite which it is often allowed to grow only in marginal spaces (312-319).
320-346	The poet.	The procession of nut trees ends and is succeeded by the fruit trees, beginning with the pomegranate (*Punica malus,* 321). Distinguished by the beauty of its fruit and flowers (328-332); sacred to Juno (333-339); hated by Ceres for preventing Proserpine's return from the Underworld (340-346).
347-376	The poet.	Oranges and lemons (*Citrus, Malus Nerantia*). Hercules' theft of the fruit from the garden of the Hesperides (354-376).
377-405	The poet.	First of the stone fruit (*monostea*) is the cherry (*Cerasus*), which will grow only in a temperate climate (378-390). How Lucullus brought the cherry tree to Rome after the Mithridatic wars (Pliny, *NH* 15.30).
406-437	The poet.	Other stone fruit: the damson (*Prunus Damascenus*, 408-414), the apricot (*Malum praecox*, 415-419), various kinds of peach (420-437).
438-442	The poet.	The cornel-cherry *(Cornus*) and its use in making spear-shafts.
443-446	The poet.	The jujube tree (*Ziziphus*) and its use in making lyres.
447-482	The poet.	The lotus tree (*Lotos*) and its use in making flutes, which bestow immortality on the tree.
483-513	The poet.	The palm tree (*Palma*); its association with victory (483-495) and with virtue (495-501); its fruit, and the wine made from its fruit (502-5); its chaste sexual reproduction (506-513).
514-595	The poet.	The olive (*Oliva*), sacred to Minerva (515-516). The story of the contest between Neptune and Minerva for patronage of Athens (517-538). The sanctity of the olive and the sacrilege of Halirrhotius (539-550; Servius Danielis *schol. ad* Virgil, *Georgics* 1.18). Olive oil prevents swords from rusting and is used in military training in the wrestling-ground; olive leaves to crown the victor (550-559). Ease of cultivation; slow growth (559-71); further uses of olive oil (572-586); its role in ancient Jewish ceremony (590-2). As the tree departs, Minerva fashions a wreath of victory from its leaves.
596-605	The poet.	Many-seeded fruit (*polyostea*), beginning with the medlar and myrtle (*Mespilus, Myrtus*) Cyclamen 4: powers against sores, tumours and pockmarks (895-906); assistance in childbirth (906-7).
606-626	The poet.	The apple and the pear (*Malus, Pyrus*). Their enjoyment by rich and poor alike (608-612). The cider made from their fruit (613-621). Pomona smiles at the long procession, but Bacchus pulls faces (624-6).
627-635	The poet.	The quince (*Cydonia malus*).
636-645	The poet.	Berries: barberry, gooseberry (*Berberis*, 639); currant (*Ribes*, 640); rapberry and strawberry (*Rubus*, *Fraga*, 640). See Cowley's note on 639.
646-672	The poet.	The mulberry (*Morus*). Late to come into leaf (646-661). The importance of the leaves to the production of silk (662-72).

673-726	The poet.	The fig (*Ficus*). Sustains the poor and graces the tables of the rich (683-4). The legend of Phytalus, given the fig by Ceres in return for hospitality (685-687; Pausanias 1.37.2). The fig's lack of flowers (688-696); its propensity to abort its fruit (697-700). Uses in medicine: soothing the throat, unblocking the ears (699-707), loosening the bowels (708-709); curing grangrene, leprosy, impetigo and other skin infections (710-713); gout and dropsy (714). Plutarch's assertion (curtly dismissed in Cowley's note) that the fig tree is never struck by lightning (720-726; Plutarch, *Moralia* 8.684c).
727-782	The poet.	The vine (*Vitis*). A hymn to wine as a source of poetic inspiration (727-50) and to its power to strengthen and cheer the spirits (751-782).
783-797	The poet; Iacchus (787-789).	Iacchus offers Omelochilus a drink from his wine-skin, saying that it will cleanse his cannibal stomach (785-89). The Amerindian god, unaccustomed to the sour taste, is only restrained from throwing a punch by his fear of the Europeans, and summons the fruit trees of the New World.
798-834	The poet; Venus (800-803); Pachamama (806-834).	The coca plant (*Coca*). Venus taunts the tree, calling it a eunuch and a dwarf (800-803); Pachamama explains that it is the most fertile of all American trees (809-814); describes the sustaining power of its leaves, which enable the Amerindians to endure their present state of servitude (804-834).
835-845	The poet.	The hovia (*Hovia*). Its power to bestow restorative sleep.
846-858	The poet.	The plantain (*Bacova Brasiliae*). The size of its leaves (846-849); the regeneration of its fruit (850-858).
859-869	The poet.	The prickly pear (*Ficus Indica*) and its prickly spines.
870-877	The poet.	The tuna plant (*Tuna*) and the red dye made from the cochineal insects which live on its leaves.
878-906	The poet.	The cocoa plant (*Cacao*), provider of chocolate and cocoa fibre (880-885). Its beans used as currency (891-906).
907-911	The poet.	The avocado (*Aguacata*),
912-949	The poet.	The agave (*Metla*). Its delicious fruit and nourishing leaves (915-918); the fibre made from the leaves, and the needles from its spines (919-922); the refreshing juice inside its trunk, used to make the alcoholic drink pulque (923-49).
950-969	The poet.	The coconut (*Coca*). The many uses of its fruit, wood, fibre and shells.
970-980	The poet.	The Amerindian gods are certain of victory, while the European deities look on in astonishment.
981-1030	The poet; Omelochilus (1010).	Pomona considers her verdict (980-987). Bacchus and Omelochilus, who have been playing drinking games, begin to quarrel (988-999), and Omelochilus throws a coconut shell at Bacchus (1000-1005). Bacchus retaliates by throwing his goblet, crying out in Aztec-Nahuatl (1006-1011; see Monreal 2010: 274-278), and a brawl erupts between Old and New World gods.
1031-1077	The poet.	Apollo prevents disaster by calming the Amerindian gods with the magical strains of his lyre.
1078-1200	The poet (1078-1079; 1141-1145); Apollo (1080-1141; 1146-1200).	The voyage of Columbus (1080-1123). Spanish greed for gold and its disastrous consequences for America, whose fortunes have now reached their lowest ebb (1124-41). Europe will be destroyed by internecine strife (1146-53) and America will receive her refugees, who will plunder America's resources but will bestow civilisation in return, making

		America a safe haven for the arts and sciences (1153-1191). Finally, with Europe lying in ruins, there will rise up an American empire to rival that of Rome (1192-1200).

Table 6: *Plantarum* 6

Where Greek names are given, they are those used by Cowley in the main text of the poem. In those cases, the Latin names are taken from Cowley's footnotes.

Lines	*Voice*	*Content*
1-39	The poet.	The poet asks his Muse to accompany him through a dense forest (1-17). He recalls the story of Charles II and the Boscobel oak, and promises to plant a grove to him (18-25). Cowley will lay bare the secrets of the forest (26-39).
40-65	The poet.	The action takes place in the halcyon days of the Caroline peace (40-54); the people's desire for change for its own sake (55-65).
66-152	The poet.	Portents of impending catastrophe, some witnessed by the poet himself in boyhood (72-103); omens and prodigies in the forests (110-152).
153-183	The poet.	The Forest of Dean, where the Dryad of the Oak summons a meeting of the forest nymphs (171-174), who assemble in the guise of trees (175-183).
183-190	The poet.	The poplar (Greek *Leucëis*, Latin *Populus*) and its association with Hercules.
190-199	The poet.	The alder (*Alnus*) and its association with Phaethon (190-2); the willow (*Olesicarpia*, *Salix*), plant of chastity (193-9)
200-209	The poet; the Elder (202-206).	The elder (Greek *Akte*, Latin *Sambucus*). Its ability to expel water from the body.
210-219	The poet.	The birch (*Betula*) and its use as the schoolmaster's cane.
220-227	The poet.	The maple (Greek *Sphendamnis*, Latin *Acer*) and the precious inlaid furniture made from its wood.
228-233	The poet.	The hornbeam (Greek *Zygia;* Latin *Carpinus,* 228-230*);* the elm (Greek *Ptelea,* Latin *Ulmus*, 231-233). Trees which are rustic but useful.
234-249	The poet.	The beech (Greek *Oxya*; Latin *Fagus*). The multiple uses of its wood.
250-255	The poet.	The ash (Greek *Melia*, Latin *Fraxinus*). Its use for spear-shafts.
256-266	The poet.	The lime (Greek *Philyra,* Latin *Tilia*). The manufacture of paper from its bark.
267-268	The poet.	The wood-pear and the crab-apple (Greek *Achras*, *Oreimelis*; Latin *Pyri et Mali sylvestris*).
269-275	The poet.	Trees of both forest and garden: the sorb-apple (Greek *Ouas*, Latin *Sorbus,* 270), the barberry (Greek *Oxyancantha*, Latin *Berberis*, 271), the mulberry (Greek *Sycaminos*, Latin *Morus*, 271-272), the cornel-cherry (Greek *Craneia*, Latin *Cornus,* 272), the walnut (*Iuglans* 273), the hazel (*Corylus*, 273) and the chestnut (*Castanea*, 273).

276-297	The poet.	The hawthorn (*Spina alba*). Hawthorn hedges (278-292); use by the ancients for marriage-torches (293-7).
298-301	The poet.	The blackthorn (*Prumnitis*, *Prunus sylvestris* 299), bramble (*Virgo batis*, *Ruber* 300) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*, 300).
302-330	The poet.	The procession of evergreens begins with the box tree (Greek *Pyxias*, Latin *Buxus*, 307). The durability of its wood (307-309). Topiary (309-320); boxwood carving (321-330).
331-340	The poet.	The holly (Greek *Agrias*, Latin *Aquifolium*). Its use as a Christmas decoration.
341-344	The poet.	The arbutus (Greek *Comaris*, Latin *Arbutus*). The only tree to provide fruit in winter.
345-348	The poet.	The privet (Greek *Phillyrea*) and the pyracantha (*Pyracantha*, 345).
349-366	The poet.	The yew (Greek *Smilax,* Latin *Taxus*). Vigorous (and erroneous) denial of the tree's toxicity. See also Gerard and Johnson 1633: 1371.
367-372	The poet.	The juniper (*Iuniperus*) and the false belief that it is dangerous to sleep in its shade.
373-377	The poet.	The savin (*Sabina*) and its abortifacient properties.
378-398	The poet; Apollo (389-92).	The cypress (*Cypressus*). The metamorphosis of Cyparissus (*Metamorphoses* 10.106-125).
399-416	The poet.	The laurel (*Laurus*). Association with Apollo (399-404); with prophecy (405-410); with royalty, victory, and poetry (410-416).
417-427	The poet.	The fir (Greek *Elate*, Latin *Abies*) and pine (Greek *Peuce*, Latin *Pinus*). Their height (417-424) and their use in shipbuilding (425-434).
428-434	The poet.	The holm-oak (Greek *Prinos*, Latin *Ilex*), which grows in Britain only in proximity to the king.
435-465	The poet.	The oak (*Quercus*). Birth of the first humans from oak trees (444-451). The Golden Age, when all human needs were supplied by the oak (452-465).
465-477	The poet.	The end of the Golden Age.
478-514	The poet.	The oak's provision of material for use on land (478-483) and sea (484-491). The world's bounty opened up by maritime trade (492-514).
515-532	The poet.	Britain's good fortune in being surrounded by the sea and supplied with oak trees to provide a fleet.
533-557	The poet.	The ancient oracular function of oak trees (533-548), now restricted by the gods to assemblies of trees: oaks are no longer allowed to speak to humans (549-557).
558-581	The Dryad.	The Dryad will explain the portents witnessed in the forest (558-565). She has prophetic authority as the tree she inhabits is descended from the sacred oak of Dodona (566-8). The story of Brutus, legendary ancestor of the Britons, who, exiled from Italy, came to Epirus and consulted the Dodona oak (569-581).
582-619	The Dodona oak.	The oracle's response to Brutus. After long wanderings, he will settle in the far west, where his descendants will found a maritime empire (581-606). When he arrives in Britain, he is to plant acorns from the Dodona oak, which will grow into trees whose fame will surpass that of their parent (607-619).

620-629	The Dryad.	Brutus followed his instructions, and the oak from which the Dryad speaks is descended from these acorns (620-624). It witnessed the omens heralding the Viking invasions, which were not unlike the present prodigies and portents.
630-681	The Dryad.	The First English Civil War. The Bishops' War (1639; 630-642); the trial and execution of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (1641; 642-648); the Battle of Powick Bridge, near Worcester, first engagement of the Civil War (September 1642; 649-52); the Battle of Edgehill (23 October 1642; 653-661). War rages over the entire country (662-670). Engagements at Newbury (1643 and 1644; 671-673); Marston Moor (1644; 676-677); decisive defeat at Naseby (1645; 677-678).
682-737	The Dryad.	The Second English Civil War. Charles I's escape from Oxford and surrender to the Scots (1646; 687-700); his return to Parliamentarian custody (1647: 701-710); his imprisonment on the Isle of Wight (712-4); the battles of the Second Civil War (714-725). After such carnage, it is not right to lament the future death of the king, but rather to execrate the villainy of those who will cause it (726-733). The Dryad begins to narrate the regicide (January 1649), but breaks off, overcome with emotion (734-737).
737-747	The poet.	The Dryad weeps, and is joined by the other trees.
748-790	The Dryad.	A wounded and decapitated Britain is consumed by snakes and worms (748-760). Violence and greed reign unchecked (761-781); the victor delights in destruction for its own sake (782-790).
791-816	The Dryad.	The destruction of the forest.
817-837	The Dryad.	The tide will turn (817-823); the son of Charles, after long exile, will one day regain the sceptre (823-837).
838-931	The Dryad.	Charles' return to Scotland in 1650 and his recognition as king (838-862); the march south to regain England (1651; 863-888); defeat by Cromwell at the Battle of Worcester (1651; 889-903). Charles regroups with the Earl of Derby, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and the Duke of Buckingham (905-915); they fail to rally the troops (916-931).
932-938	The Dryad.	The Dryad announces that she is about to explain why she has summoned the forest nymphs.
939-1022	The Dryad.	The wood at Boscobel, which will see the turning-point in Charles' fortunes (939-949). Charles will dismiss his comrades and adopt rustic disguise (949-962). When all other hiding-places are denied him, he will turn to the trees (983-967). The forest nymphs are to take up sentry positions in the trunks of their trees and to form a thick screen with their branches (968-979. A rustic is discerned beneath the oak tree, whom the Dryad gradually recognises as the king (980-998). When Charles' officer William Careless appears with the news that Cromwell's men are searching the area, Charles and Careless climb the Dryad's tree (999-1022).
1023-1088	The Dryad.	The Restoration. The role of General Monk (1040-4); the triumphal return to London (1048-1063); the popular celebrations (1064-1068); the return of the Golden Age (1069-77); Henrietta Maria (1078-1088).

1089-1125	The Dryad.	Advice to Charles: he must heal the wounds of civil war, restore respect for the law and repair corrupted morals, like the returning owner of a neglected garden (1093-1102); he is to show as much care for the country as for the city, and in particular to plant trees which will be the foundation of a maritime empire (1089-1125).
1126-1226	The Dryad.	The Battle of Lowestoft (13 June 1665). Neither Charles nor the British oak will tolerate Dutch naval ambition (1126-1137). The Dutch fleet approaches and is sighted (1138-1149). Successful engagements by Prince Rupert and James, Duke of York (1150-1159); explosion of the Dutch flagship, the *Eendracht* (1160-1181); destruction of further Dutch ships (1182-1200). The difficulty of narrating the many different fates of ships and sailors (1201-1206). The deaths of Richard Boyle, Vicount Muskerry and the Earl of Falmouth from a single cannonball and the Duke of York's narrow escape (1206-1219). Flight of the Dutch fleet (1220-1226).
1227-1230	The poet.	Thus ended the Dryad's speech. There are many glories to come which she did not mention, and which the gods are reserving for future generations and better poets.

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